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in aid of Perron against the Sikhs, so that about the 20th of February we had mustered 10,000 horse, and marched to Tanessur. Bunjah Sing retired on our approach, and joined the main body at Pattialah; but, on the 10th of March, a treaty was entered into, and ratified, with all the Sikhs, which terminated the business amicably.

By the 1st of April, till which time the army remained at Tanessur, all the Sikh chieftains had paid their visits to Perron; and on the 2nd we marched towards Dehlee. About the 10th we reached Paneeput, where the Begum Sumeroo * joined us, with four battalions; and on our way to Dehlee we chastised some large villages for refusing to pay their rents to Perron's collectors. Among these was Naweltha, which lies about seven côs west of Paneeput. In the end of April we encamped at Deetaram-ka-Serai, from whence the Begum was ordered to return home to Seidhannah.

Colonel Pedron had by this time completed the third brigade, and a number of officers were taken into the service and posted to it. Captain Smith was also moved from our brigade. Perron retired with the cavalry to his head-quarters at Coel; and

* An account of this lady will hereafter appear.

the fortress of Alleeghur was ordered to be put in complete repair, and garrisoned with 2,000 Bhadawar Rajepoots. Our brigade (the second) was sent, under the command of Colonel Pholman, to Muttra, where we arrived on the 1st of the month.

At this time Sindea, who lived in fear of the Mahrattas, left Poonah, on his way to Hindostan. When he reached Asseerghur he detached Colonel Hessing's brigade in advance, meaning soon to follow; but by the end of July, when Hessing had reached Oojeine, the Nerbudda rose, and Sindea was obliged to remain during the rains at Asseerghur. In the mean time, Jesswunt Rao Holcar, who had raised a large army, both infantry and horse, surrounded Hessing and his brigade, and cut it to pieces. He fought gallantly for ten or fifteen days, but no succour arriving, he and all his troops fell victims to Holcar's rage and cruelty.* In this sad affair

* See Grant Duff's Mahratta history. Before attacking Hessing, Holcar had cut off a smaller detachment, under Captain MacIntyre, which laid down their arms to him at a place called Neuree. He afterwards attacked Sindea's grand park of artillery, escorted by Captain Brownrigg, with four battalions; but that officer, hearing of Holcar's approach, took up a strong position, and beat him off with great loss.

sixteen country-born officers, who were all my school-fellows, were killed at their guns. They all had entered the service within a month of each other. Among them were Captain-lieutenant MacPherson, son of Captain MacPherson of the Company's service; Lieutenant Graham, whose father was an ensign in the same; Lieutenants Montague, Davis, and Arcote. Hessing was the only European that escaped. Major Dareebdoon, a half Frenchman, was wounded and made prisoner; and old John Hessing paid 30,000 to 40,000 rupees to get him out of Holcar's hands.

On the 1st of August, Perron came to Muttra to punish Ackajee,* the Mahratta killadar, at Agra; and, on the 20th, we laid siege to the fort of that city. Ackajee defended it well for two months, and we lost a great number of men; but at length we were obliged to blow up a bastion on the river-side near the town, and when this had been levelled, and Ackajee informed that not a man should be spared if he did not give up the fort, he *kabooled* (acquiesced) and surrendered it, stipulating for being allowed to retire to Gwalior

* There seems a mistake in this name, probably it was *Abajee*.

with his private property. Our loss in this siege was about 1,000 men in killed and wounded.

Perron returned to Alleeghur about the 10th of November, and I was sent with three battalions, a battering train, and 500 horse, to attack a fort near the Chumbul river, belonging to a Rajepoot thakoor, called Ram Paul Sing. The rest of the brigade marched back to Muttra, and Colonel Sutherland, forgiven by the interest of his father-in-law, Colonel John Hessing, was sent to command the first brigade with Sindea.

I arrived with my detachment before the fort of Ram Paul Sing on the 15th November, reconnoitred it forthwith, and next day prepared to attack it. It was a little mud fort, so level with the crest of the glacis that there was no touching the bastions with our guns. On the 20th, I opened our trenches, and advanced by regular approaches to the glacis. From thence I ordered a mine to be carried on under it, because the guns could not bear upon the rounee (counterscarp). By the 5th of December the mines were loaded; and, on the morning of the 6th, the whole of the three battalions were ordered into the trenches, ready to storm, in three columns. At ten A. M., after a smart cannonading of four hours, the mines

were sprung, and so well did they work that the whole of the glacis was thrown into the ditch. Immediately after, the troops moved out with scaling-ladders, and placed them, but Ram Paul, with his 300 Rajepoots, defended the walls so well that the storming party was beaten back.

I gave the men an hour's rest, and then, at noon, the parties moved again, and carried the place with great difficulty, the whole of the brave garrison being put to the sword. Only Ram Paul and a few more were taken prisoners alive, but all were severely wounded. Our loss was 200 men killed, and about 100 more wounded. My brother, who was with me, was wounded through the neck by a matchlock ball. I sent him with the wounded to Agra, but Ram Paul and his comrades were sent to Alleeghur.*

Having reported the whole affair to Major Pholman, two of the battalions, with the horse and battering guns, were ordered to join the brigade at Muttra; while I, with my battalion, was directed to join the Karowlee Rajah, to the south of Agra, which I did in the end of Decem-

* This serves as another illustration of Rajepoot resolution and sense of honour, which will yield to no odds, and prefers dying sword in hand.

ber. It appeared that the Karowlee Rajah had fallen out with the Ooneara Rajah, whose territory lies near Tonk-Rampoorah, and had hired several battalions belonging to native chieftains, and my battalion from Perron, to fight his battles. Our force amounted to six battalions, and about 2,000 horse, but very bad; and fifteen pieces of cannon, besides the five 6-pounders belonging to my battalion.

On the 1st January 1800, the Rajah reached the Bunas river, near Tonke. I sent my spies to the Ooneara Rajah's camp, pitched about two côs from his capital, and discovered that he had about 3,000 Rajepoot horse and 3,000 infantry, belonging to his relative, the Jeypore Rajah, with about twenty pieces of cannon. He moved to a spot five côs distant from us, and there encamped, keeping the Bunas river between us.

The business, however, began to wear a bad aspect; for not only was the Karowlee man a coward, but he had not cash to pay us regularly, and the battalions he had hired grew dissatisfied, and teased him every day for money. I now began to be uneasy about the fate of my own corps, and reported to Colonel Pholman that no dependence was to be placed on the troops which

the Rajah had hired, so that he would require to reinforce me immediately, as otherwise the battalion must be cut to pieces.

The Ooneara Rajah soon became aware of the badness of our troops, and, crossing the river on the 25th of January, took up a good position about six miles in our front, from whence he began to correspond with the native commandants of the battalions with us. I informed our chieftain of this, but I could not convince him of the treachery of the native commanders. On the 31st, the Ooneara Rajah moved in battle array to attack us, and we drew out to meet him in one line, with cavalry on the flanks. About nine A.M. the armies came in sight of each other, and at eleven the cannonading commenced. After a few rounds, the whole of the infantry on our side silenced their guns. The Ooneara cavalry charged the Karowlee cavalry on the left, and immediately our infantry went over and joined the enemy.

As soon as I perceived this, I commenced retreating to a deserted village in our rear, which I gained with difficulty. Two of the enemy's battalions came up to attack me, but I charged and drove them back. I now saw the whole of

his cavalry and infantry moving towards us; and, as I had no hopes of succour, I resolved to retreat, if possible, to Tonke, which was about four côs distant, and belonged to Sindea.

I called together all my native officers, and asked them what they thought of my plan, which was to defend the village till night should come on, and then retreat to Tonke. They said that it would be impossible to stand out in the village against the force and cannon that were coming against us; and that it would be better to commence the retreat immediately, and try to gain the ravines, which were about two côs distant, before the main body should come up, and cut the Karowlee man's cavalry to pieces. I agreed to this proposition accordingly, and moved out, resolved to die or make good my retreat.

The two battalions of the enemy that were near me had been joined by the Rajah himself, with about 1,000 horse, who charged me several times as I commenced to retreat. I repulsed them, but with the loss of one gun, which broke down, and of my own horse mortally wounded, though it still kept on; but the remainder of their battalions now coming fast up, I found further progress impossible, and drew up in a fine plain to

receive them. Here I made a short speech to the men: I told them we were trying to avoid a thing which none could escape—that was *death*; that come it would, and, as such was the case, it became us to meet it, and die like soldiers.

Thus resolved, we allowed the enemy to come within fifty yards, when we gave them a volley, and charged. Those in our front gave way, and we captured their guns. As those on the flanks, however, now galled us with their cannon, I threw myself into a square, and sought to gain the ravines, now only about half a côs from us. But fate had decided against us. They pressed us so close on all sides, that my men began to lose their coolness; we were charged too, and lost three more of our guns. Still, with the one left I kept moving on, and got clear of the enemy's infantry, who had got a little sickened, and showed less disposition to chase; but the cavalry kept on charging, and my men giving up very fast.

I still had some 300 good soldiers and my gun left, but a party of horse pressed us so hard, that I moved out with 100 men and stopped them; but when I looked back, I found only ten had followed me—the rest had turned back and joined

the gun. As I was going to follow them, a horseman galloped up, matchlock in hand, and shot me through the groin. I fell, and became insensible immediately; and, after my fall, the poor remains of my brave but unfortunate fellows met the same fate. I do not believe that fifty men out of the 1,000 escaped from the field untouched.

It was about three in the afternoon when I fell, and I did not regain my senses till sunrise next morning. When I came to myself, I soon remembered what had happened, for several other wounded soldiers were lying near me. My pantaloons were the only rag that had been left me, and I crawled under a bush to shelter myself from the sun. Two more of my battalion crept near me;—the one a soobahdar, that had his leg shot off below the knee; the other, a jemadar had a spear wound through his body. We were now dying of thirst, but not a soul was to be seen; and in this state we remained the whole day, praying for death. But alas! night came on, but neither death nor assistance. The moon was full and clear, and about midnight it was very cold. So dreadful did this night appear to me, that I swore, if I survived, to have nothing more to do

with soldiering,—the wounded on all sides crying out for water—the jackalls tearing the dead, and coming nearer and nearer to see if we were ready for them; we only kept them off by throwing stones, and making noises. Thus passed this long and horrible night.

Next morning we spied a man and an old woman, who came to us with a basket and a pot of water; and to every wounded man she gave a piece of joaree bread, from the basket, and a drink from her water-pot. To us she gave the same, and I thanked Heaven and her. But the soobahdar was a high caste Rajepoot; and, as this woman was a Chumar (or of the lowest caste), he would receive neither water nor bread from her. I tried to persuade him to take it, that he might live; but he said that in our state, with but a few hours more to linger, what was a little more or less suffering to us—why should he give up his faith for such an object? no, he preferred to die unpolluted.

I asked the woman where she lived, and she gave me the name of her village, which was about two côs from Tonke, and a côs and a half from where we lay. About three in the afternoon, a chieftain of the Ooneara Rajah's, with 100 horse-

men, and coolees and beeldars,* arrived on the ground with orders to bury the dead, and to send the wounded into camp. The poor soobahdar now got water, of which he was in the utmost need—indeed, nearly dead for want of it. When we were brought to camp, we found a large two-poled tent pitched, in which all the wounded of my battalion were collected, and, to the best of my recollection, they amounted now to 300 men. No sooner was I brought in, than they all called out, "Ah, here is our dear captain!" and some offered me bread, and some water, or what they had. The chieftain had wrapped me in a large chudder (sheet) when he took me up; and right glad was I to find so many of my brave fellows near me.

My wound was now dressed by the native doctors, and the ball taken out. They soon sent the Rajah word of my arrival, and he sent for me immediately. His tent was close by, and they carried me thither upon my charpaee (low bedstead). The Rajah got up when I entered and made my salaam, and sending for a morah (stool), he sat down by me, asked my name, who I was, and what rank I held. I replied that I was a soldier,

* Porters and pioneers.

and now his prisoner. He then sent me back to my tent, saying that I required rest, and gave me much praise for my conduct in the day of battle.

No sooner had I reached my tent, than a chobedar came, on the Rajah's part, and presented me with 500 rupees, and a tray of cooked meats for dinner. Of the first I gave the chobedar 100 rupees as a present; the other 400, with the victuals, I divided amongst my men. As for myself, the surgeon gave me a good dose of opium, which procured me a fine night's rest. Next morning the Rajah pitched a small tent for me, and wanted to remove me from the men, but I begged he would permit me to stay with them; on which he came himself, and sat talking to me for an hour of different things, and sent me food from his own kitchen, and was kind and generous to all the wounded.

We remained ten days with him in camp, after which he sent us all into his capital of Oonearah, where we were lodged in a large *pucka* house (that is, built of stone and lime). In a few days he followed, and visited us every day, and allowed me to write to Perron, stipulating for my letter being in Persian. We remained with him a

month, when he sent us all to Bhurtpore, presenting me with a grand khilut, including a horse, a shield, and a sword; and giving ten rupees to each of the men, with more in proportion to the native officers. I am glad to say that my friend the soobahdar was also fast recovering.*

We reached Bhurtpore on the 15th of March, and after remaining there five days, we went to Muttra, and joined our brigade there. Perron, who was there, came immediately to see me: he gave us all high commendation for our conduct, and promoted every man that was able to do duty; on the rest he settled pensions. To me he gave the command of his own body-guard, which consisted of two battalions, the 1st and 2nd, called by his own name. Here, too, I met my brother, who had perfectly recovered of his wound, and who had been promoted to the rank of lieutenant, with the command of a battalion in the 2nd brigade under Colonel Pholman, at that time in the Jeypore country. By him I sent a thousand

* The generous conduct of the Oonearah Rajah, one of the least of the Rajepoot princes, cannot fail of striking the reader, especially as contrasted with that of Holcar and some of the native chiefs: it breathes of, and illustrates that generous and chivalrous spirit which of old was the boast and the attribute of the Rajepoot tribes.

rupees to the good and humane Chumar woman who had first assisted us, and who I called my mother.

I had now almost recovered, and went to join the body-guard at Alleeghur. Perron's conduct to me continued most kind and generous; but the two battalions of his body-guard were soon after drafted into the 3rd brigade, under Colonel Pedron, as all his force was now required for another service. In the beginning of August, this brigade was ordered to Gwalior, to join Ambajee, who had received orders to assemble all his troops to attack my poor old master, Luckwa Dada. Luckwa, after the slaughter of so many chieftains, who had taken part with the Bhyes, was convinced that Sindea would work his destruction also; so, in junction with Juggoo Bappoo, and others of that party (the Shenwee Brahmins), he raised troops, and resolved to resist. He had now collected a large army at Duttea, in Bundelcund, and was joined by the Rajah of that place, a man of note in that country.

Ambajee (Inglia) had collected at Gwalior about 20,000 horse, and three brigades of regular infantry; one being commanded by Colonel

Sheppard, one by a native, Colonel Caleb allee, and ours by Colonel Pedron. But not liking to proceed against Luckwa, with whom he had been on friendly terms, he was delaying from day to day to march, in spite of repeated orders to that effect from Sindea: at length, however, being threatened by that prince with sequestration of his whole country, in case of further demurring, he placed the whole army under the command of his brother Bala-rao, and we marched on the 15th of October.

We arrived, at length, at a large town, called Beja Ghur, fifteen côs east of Soundah, a strong fortress on the banks of the Sone river, belonging to the Rajah of Duttea; under the walls of which Luckwa and the Rajah, with their combined forces, were encamped. It was reported that these amounted to 10,000 Bundelah troops, infantry and cavalry, with two regular brigades, one of which was commanded by Colonel Toone,* an Irishman, the other by a native Rajah, Buroor Sing; and 15,000 Mahratta horse. Here we remained encamped for a month; our chief not

* Probably *Tone*, who published an account of the Mahrattas, and was brother of the well-known *Wolfe Tone*

being inclined to move till Perron himself marched from Alleeghur, with five battalions of the fourth brigade, and 5,000 regular Hindostanee horse. He reached us about the 20th of December, by which time we had crossed the river, and encamped about ten côs distant from Luckwa's position.

Skirmishing now took place every day, but nothing of consequence occurred; till, at last, Perron determined upon making an attack. Luckwa's position was a strong one, having Soundah and the river in his rear, ravines extending for five côs in his front, and his flanks supported by ravines and two strong forts. Through these ravines there were but three passages, all well defended by Luckwa's infantry and guns.

Perron formed his infantry into three columns. The right consisted of our brigade, under command of Colonel Pedron; the second, or centre, of Sheppard's brigade, commanded by Colonel Sheppard; and the left, of the five battalions of the fourth brigade and the regular horse, under Captain Syme. We moved on the morning of the 5th of January 1801, and took up our ground in front of the enemy; each column severally

having to attack one of the three passages so well defended by Luckwa. At dawn on the 6th, we were ordered to attack. Colonel Toone's brigade happened to be opposed to our column, and he defended his pass with great bravery: we carried it, however, though with great difficulty, making prisoners of Colonel Toone himself, Captain Evans, and several other officers.

Colonel Sheppard attacked Rajah Burar Sing, and succeeded also, with difficulty; but Captain Syme, who had to deal with the Duttea troops, was beaten back, with great slaughter. Perron, on hearing this, galloped up, and placing himself at the head of the column, led them on with great bravery and coolness, and beat back the Duttea troops in their turn. Our brigade (third) took sixteen guns belonging to Colonel Toone's force; our loss on the occasion being two officers killed, one wounded, and about 1,000 men killed and wounded. Captain Sheppard had three European officers killed and one wounded, and about 1,500 men killed and wounded. The third column lost Captain Syme and Lieutenant Arnold, killed, and Lieutenant Paish wounded. The fifth battalion lost half their men, and had it not been for General Perron's prompt and

gallant assistance, the whole would have been cut up. Perron himself was slightly wounded by a spear.

Poor Luckwa Dada's fate was more severe. Both the Duttea Rajah and Rajah Burar Sing were killed, himself severely wounded, every gun he had taken, in number thirty-five, his whole army destroyed and dispersed, and both his and the Rajah's camp totally plundered. He himself took shelter in the fort, while we returned in triumph to camp with Colonel Toone and his officers.

On the 7th, in the evening, General Perron visited Colonel Toone, and behaved very kindly both to him and to his officers, supplying them with handsome camp equipage, such as tents, camels, and horses. To the Colonel he offered service, but that gentleman declined it; and Perron permitted him and his officers to retire to Mundoosore, the capital of Holcar, furnishing him, as I understood, with 10,000 rupees for their expenses. Luckwa, with a few horsemen, fled to Bettoor, where he soon died of his wounds.* On the 15th of March we arrived again at Alleeghur, and went into cantonments.

* He died in a sanctuary at a place called Saloombra.—Tod's *Rajahstan*, vol. i. p. 456.

CHAPTER VII.

Perron's power—Disliked by the Mahratta officers—His policy—And preference of French officers—Gopaul Rao Bhow's advice to Sindea—Degeneracy of Mahratta chiefs—Holcar—His origin and family—Ahalia Bhye—Tookojee Holcar—Jesswunt Rao Holcar—His alliance with Ameer Khan—His plundering system—Beats Hessing and MacIntyre near Oojeine—Beaten by De Boigne near Indore—Beats the Peishwah at Poona—His cruelty—The "Gurdee ka Wukht."

General Perron had now succeeded in bringing all Hindostan under subjection; and every rajah and soobah, from the Nerbudda to the Sutlej, regarded him as lord and master. He had now under his command four regular brigades, of 8,000 effective men each, and 10,000 regular Hindostanee horse, besides the command of all the troops of every Rajah and chief in that wide territory. He now began to feel his power

and to change his manner. Instead of being, as formerly, a good, plain, honest soldier, beloved by the soldiery and esteemed by all about him, he began to turn his ear to flattery, and to neglect merit, while his favourites got all the good appointments, and he himself thought only of amassing money. All the Mahratta chiefs began to hate him, and to lay plots for his ruin. They even entered into correspondence with the English authorities for this purpose, for they had all taken a great aversion to the regular troops, who they thought had much supplanted them in the favour of their master. Yet even the interests of this generous master began to be neglected by Perron, in spite of all he owed to him. His allowances were indeed enormous. Besides his stated pay of 15,000 rupees a month, as commander-in-chief, his table expenses were allowed him; and for his khassa risaleh, or household troop of 800 horse, he drew pay at the rate of forty rupees each per month. Then from the Jaidad collection he had five per cent.; and on every *mamleh*, or settlement he made with the independent Rajahs, he exacted twenty-five per cent.; so that, upon the lowest calculation, of the natives he drew about 50,000 to 60,000 rupees

per month: and so puffed up was he with his riches and power, that he allowed himself to be persuaded by his flatterers to send an ambassador to Buonaparte. Monsieur Desoutee was the person despatched, but the purport or result of his embassy was never known.

It became, at all events, his policy or his pleasure to give the preference in his choice of officers to his own countrymen over all others, and this to such an extent as not only to disgust the Mahrattas, but to excite the jealousy of the English and country-borns against them. But this was not the only error committed by Perron about this period. Besides his own brigades, Sindea had several others in his employ, of whose commanders Perron became extremely jealous. Of these, the first was commanded by Major Brownrigg, an Irishman, a very brave and able commander, who was much liked by the soldiery, and high in Sindea's favour at Oojeine, in consequence of his successes against Holcar. Another was commanded by Colonel Hessing. Feloze,* Mecule, and Babtiste,† had

* Fidele Filoze was an Italian, well known for his treacherous seizure of Nana Furnavese.

† This is probably Jean or Gian Battiste Filoze, son of the former, called by the natives John Butteejs.

each of them another, besides two or three more commanded by natives. Most of these commanders returned this jealousy, and the Europeans, in this respect, had become as bad as the Mahrattas. To add to the critical situation of Perron, he was hated by Surjee Rao Ghattkey, Sindea's father-in-law, who ruled all his son-in-law's councils, and who sought the General's ruin.

All these jealousies and intrigues had a lamentable effect upon the interests of Sindea. The Mahrattas became quite disunited and changed. No longer held in dread of the Moghuls and Patans in Hindostan, they began to fall like them. Gopaul Rao Bhow, a chief of great name, of sixty years of age—a Mahratta of the old school —and who had been made commander-in-chief with Sindea at Oojeine, made a striking remark as to this degeneracy in open durbar, on the occasion of Sindea's desiring him to build cantonments at Oojeine:—"Our fathers," said he, "the first founders of the Mahratta power, made their houses on the backs of their horses; gradually the house came to be made of cloth; and now you are making it of mud; take care—and mark my words—take care that in a very short time it don't all turn to mud, and is never rebuilt." The

flatterers called him a fool for this, and Sindea laughed at him, and said, "Who is there that dare oppose me, as long as I have my infantry and my guns?" On which Gopaul and Jadoo Rao both replied, — "Beware, it is those very infantry and these guns which will be your ruin."

Sindea, indeed, seemed as mad as the rest, for he now took to kite-flying, nautching, and drinking, with all the other worst native vices; and Perron, feeling himself master of Hindostan, paid little regard to his master's orders. The Peishwah, at Poonah, was quite as bad as Sindea. The Nagpore Rajah did not seem much inclined to move in any way; and of all the Mahratta chiefs, Holcar was the only man of enterprise remaining in the Dekhan; nor did he lose the opportunity afforded him by circumstances of laying a good foundation for future power. But as this chief played so considerable a part in the struggles of this eventful period, it may tend to elucidate the narrative to the general reader if we describe, in a few words, the history of his rise, and the position he held at this time in Central India.

Mulhar Rao Holcar, the founder of the family greatness, was descended from a tribe of shep-

herds, and was born about the year 1693.* He was the rival of the great Madhajee Sindea, with whom he for several years disputed the ascendency in Hindostan. He had but one son, Khundee Rao, who fell in the great battle of Paneeput, and who married that Ahalia Bhye, afterwards so well known in Malwah. This prince had also but one son, who succeeded his grandfather, Mulhar Rao, but who, fortunately, lived a very short time, as he proved not only wicked and cruel, but deficient in intellect. On his death, Ahalia Bhye claimed and maintained the right of succession to the government in her own person; and she proved so wise, so amiable, and benevolent a princess, that all her subjects rejoiced under her rule, and adored her as an avatar of the Deity when she died.†

On her accession, she raised a sillahdar, Tookojee Holcar, of the same tribe, but no relation of the family, to the station of commander-in-

* Sir J. Malcolm's "Central India." For Holcar's origin, see Grant Duff's History, vol. i. p. 479.

† Sir J. Malcolm's "Central India." Her tomb at Maheysur, on the banks of the Nerbuddah, is still a place of Hindoo worship and pilgrimage.

chief to the forces,—a duty she could not herself discharge. She even acknowledged him as son and successor to her dignity;* and that chief very ably executed his trust, and played a conspicuous part in the contests which continually agitated the Dekhan, particularly with the family of Sindea. He left two legitimate and two illegitimate sons. Cassee Rao, the elder of the former, was weak in intellect and deformed in body; Mulhar Rao, the younger, was brave and aspiring. A contest took place between them for the supremacy; and the elder applied to Sindea's minister, Sirjee Rao Ghatkia, for assistance,—a fatal measure, which, after some insidious negotiations, terminated in the treacherous murder of Mulhar Rao, and the plunder and dispersion of both the camps by Sindea's troops.

Jesswunt Rao, the elder of the illegitimate sons, fled from the place, and, after being for some time a fugitive, found refuge at Dhar, a small Rajepoot state, where he was joined by some old adherents of the family. He now became a professed freebooter, directing his enterprizes as much as possible against the country of Sindea, the hereditary enemy of his house, and

* Sir J. Malcolm's "Central India."

in whose hands the imbecile Cassee Rao had remained a passive instrument against its interests. His younger brother, Ettojee, had worse luck in his lawless career; for, having been taken by the Peishwah in arms, that prince had him relentlessly trampled to death by elephants, looking on from a balcony all the time,—an outrage which Jesswunt Rao never forgot or forgave.

About the year 1798 he made overtures to Ameer Khan, another freebooter, who afterwards became but too well known throughout Hindostan, and who at that time was at Bopal with 1,500 followers on foot. The negotiation led to an alliance, which continued till Jesswunt's death. His enterprizes now became more important, and we soon find him plundering many towns and districts on the Nerbudda, belonging to Sindea; and even destroying a strong detachment of the brigade commanded by the Chevalier Dudernaig, at that time in the service of Cassee Rao. These successes, combined with the utter inefficiency of Cassee Rao himself, induced not only Dudernaig and his battalions, but other parties of troops in the same service, to come over and join the more energetic commander; so that before the year

was well out in which he had fled from Poona, Jeswunt found himself at the head of a powerful force, and the recognised guardian of Kunwar Ram, son of the murdered Mulhar Ram, in the eyes of all the adherents of the family, in Central India.

In conjunction with Ameer Khan, his predatory enterprizes continued, and Sangur, Bersiah, Seronje, Shujahalpore, and many other towns and districts, belonging both to the Peishwah and to Sindea, were sacked and destroyed with the most relentless barbarity, before the latter could well look about him or collect an army to protect his country. That prince did, however, now exert himself, and advanced his brigades to meet his enemy: but Holcar, who had now collected from 60,000 to 70,000 men, including Ameer Khan's force and that of other Pindarree chiefs, attacked a detachment of eight battalions and twenty guns, under Hessing and MacIntyre, and (as we have already learned), notwithstanding the obstinate and gallant resistance of these officers, and the unmanageable description of his own force, he almost utterly annihilated them.

But this success was far more than balanced by his subsequent defeat at Indore, where he lost all

his cannon (ninety-eight pieces), with his camp and stores, and saw his whole army destroyed and dispersed. Had Sindea followed up this blow, Holcar must have been annihilated; but believing his ancient rival quite humbled, he left him quietly at the fortress of Sarem, whither he had fled for refuge; and even entered into negotiations, having for their object the recognition of Holcar as guardian of the family interest, upon certain conditions. But into these, whether sincere or otherwise, Jesswunt Rao would not enter; and time having been given him to recover and recruit, he resumed his life of plunder and aggression, and his camp soon became filled with the rude freebooters and reckless adventurers with which Hindostan and Central India at that time swarmed, afterwards so well known as Pindarrees. He told them plainly that he now had no means of paying them regularly, but he would, at all events, lead them to abundant plunder—and this was all they required.

In 1801 he appears to have been again joined by his infantry brigades, though Dudernaig had quitted his service for that of Sindea; and thus strengthened, he continued to levy his contributions,—sometimes in Rajepootanah and on the

banks of the Chumbul, at others in Malwah and the banks of the Nerbudda,—sometimes checked, and forced to retreat, at others gathering strength, and vigorously pursuing his predatory course, but always marking his track with blood, and cruelty, and desolation.

At length he attacked Candeish, and proceeded towards Poona, with the usual exercise of atrocities and outrage. But the alarm occasioned by his progress aroused Sindea once more, and he detached a force, under Sewdasheo Bhow Bhaskur, to aid the Peishwah. Their combined forces, after some negotiation and a minor affair or two, gave battle to Holcar, on the 25th of October 1802. Holcar had succeeded in mustering fourteen battalions of regular infantry, six being under command of Colonel Vickers, four under that of Major Harding, and four under Major Armstrong. Besides these, he had 5,000 irregular infantry, and 25,000 horse. Sindea had ten battalions, six being commanded by native officers, with no Europeans, and four, though of De Boigne's old troops, had only four Europeans to lead them.

A momentary success at the beginning of the engagement seemed to incline the fortunes of the

day in favour of the combined army: but the energy of Holcar, and the steady gallantry of Vickers, Harding, and Armstrong, which the inferiorly commanded battalions of Sindea could not resist, turned the tide, and secured to Holcar a complete victory;—guns, baggage, and stores all fell into his hands, and the army of his rival was utterly driven from the field. The conqueror behaved on this occasion—no doubt from motives of policy—with unwonted moderation. Poona was left unplundered, entirely by his exertions in controlling his unruly troops; and he affected to desire an amicable arrangement with the Peishwah,—a disposition which certainly was by no means sincere, for, as we have already observed, he never could forgive that prince the savage murder of his brother, Ettojee. The mask was soon thrown aside, and Bajee Rao, the Peishwah, having fled from Poona, and ultimately to Bassein, Holcar took up Amrut Rao, the adopted son of the former Peishwah, and put him in charge of the government of Poona. Enormities of all kinds were committed by these confederates, in order to obtain the funds required for paying their armies and retaining their adherents: and so miserable was the condition of all Malwah and

Rajepootanah at this time, and indeed from the year 1800 to 1818 inclusive, from the excesses of the numerous bands of robbers, called Pindarrees, who ranged over these countries as if they were their common prey, and of the no-less ferocious chiefs and princes who disputed for power upon their soil, that the greater portion of them was utterly ruined and depopulated;* and the natives have given to that period the expressive appellation of the "gurdee-ka-wukht," that is, "the time of troubles."

But at this time the Treaty of Bassein took place; and the interference of the British authorities in favour of the oppressed and more peaceable parties gave a new turn to affairs, the results of which are well known, and which terminated in the gradual re-establishment of quiet and comparative prosperity in this long-vexed portion of India.

* So reduced was the actual number of human beings, and so utterly cowed their spirit, that the few villages that did continue to exist at great intervals, had scarcely any communication with one another; and so great was the increase of beasts of prey, and so great the terror they inspired, that the little communication that remained was often actually cut off by a single tiger known to haunt the road.

But there is another personage,—one of the many European adventurers born of the disjointed and troublous times,—who at this period had risen into considerable importance, and who makes a prominent figure in the immediately-succeeding portion of the Memoir,—this was George Thomas, who, though known by name to most Indians, may not be an acquaintance of the general reader, and who therefore must here receive some notice.

George Thomas * was a native of Tipperary, in Ireland, and came first to India as a quarter-master, or, as some say, a common sailor in a British man-of-war, in 1781-2. But, tired of the sea, and, like many other adventurers, tempted by the prospect held out to soldiers of fortune in India, he left his ship, and took service amongst the Polygars in southern India. Here he remained some years; but probably finding little temptation to continue among such a people, he turned his steps to the north, and actually tra-

* The greater part of the following account of Thomas is taken from Franklin's "Military Memoirs of George Thomas,"—a book which, though not remarkable for its literary value, is certainly authentic, as its contents were derived chiefly from the subject of the memoirs himself.

velled through the centre of India to Dehlee. At that place he received from the Begum Sumroo a commission in her army, and soon obtained great influence over her, by successfully opposing the incursions of the Sikhs, insomuch that he became her principal adviser, and married a slave-girl whom she had adopted.

His influence, however, did not last, for in the course of six or seven years he found himself supplanted by the intrigues of a rival; and about the year 1792 he quitted the service of the Begum, and betook himself to Anoopsheher, then the frontier station of the British army. But it was to the native powers, and not to the British authorities, that he looked for employment; and after a while overtures were made to him by Appa Khunde Rao, a Mahratta chief of distinction, but at that time in disgrace with Sindea, and who was raising troops upon his own account. Thomas joined this chief with 250 tried and chosen horsemen,—an accession of force which, at the time, was very valuable to the Mahratta.

Appa Khunde Rao, who appears to have aimed at independence, directed Thomas to raise a battalion of 1,000 foot and 100 cavalry, for which he assigned him certain pergunnahs in Jaedad,

situated in the county of Mewatt, south-west of Dehlee, but at that time in a state of total insubordination; so that Thomas, as soon as he could raise troops, had to go and reduce his Jaedad to order. He reached Thajara, a principal village in the centre of the country, on a dark and rainy night, after a weary march, and the inhabitants gave him a characteristic welcome, in the shape of a specimen of their skill as thieves; for they stole a horse and some things from the very centre of his camp.

This led to an attack upon the village next day, which proved rather disastrous, as his troops, seized with a panic, ran away, leaving their wounded to be cut in pieces by the enemy. The energetic courage of Mr. Thomas, in recovering a nine-pounder which had stuck in a nullah, and then using it with admirable effect upon the advancing villagers, saved his remaining troops, 300 in number; and with this small party he still offered battle to the enemy, who, however, declined it; nay, such was the effect of the gallantry displayed by Mr. Thomas in this action upon them, that an amicable adjustment was come to, by which they not only restored the stolen articles, but agreed to pay him a year's

rent. The impression thus made rendered the general settlement of the country a far more easy matter; and the burning of one or two refractory villages convinced the rest that opposition to such a power was vain, so that they agreed to pay up all arrears.

But, from the reduction of Mewatt, Thomas was shortly after summoned to the assistance of Appa Khunde Rao himself, whose troops, having mutinied, held him a sort of prisoner in the fort of Kotepootelee. Marching instantly, in spite of the heavy rain, he reached that place, and encamped under its walls, from whence he held communication with his master. The result was, that Appa, with his family and effects, quietly leaving the place, were received by Thomas, who escorted them safely to the fortress of Kanounde. For this service Appa adopted his deliverer as his son, made him handsome presents, authorized him to increase his troops by 200 foot and the same of horse, and added to his Jaedad the four pergunnahs of Jygur, Byree, Mandote, and Phatoda, worth 150,000 rupees a year.

It would be tedious to detail the strange and unaccountable system of intrigue which Appa practised against Thomas, in spite of the un-

wearied course of good service in which the latter persevered, with a constancy almost as unintelligible as the persecution of his capricious master, and which he maintained till the death of that chief. Frequently did he find his liberty or his life treacherously attempted; and yet still did he adhere to the fortunes of his first employer, and even transferred his allegiance to his son and successor, Wamun Rao, a person of less talent, and even less principle, than his father: and thus did Thomas's life become one series of petty contests and escapes from open or secret attempts to destroy him. But his military fame increased, and the name he had acquired enabled him to gather so much head as to give rise to the extraordinary project which he appears about this time (1798) to have first entertained—namely, that of establishing for himself an independent principality in the country.

As a singular proof of the estimation in which Thomas was held, we may mention that the Begum Soomroo, his first mistress, who had often joined in intrigues against him, having been made prisoner in her own palace, knowing his valour and generosity, wrote entreating him to come to her assistance,—nor did she plead in vain. Thomas,

receiving permission from Ambajee Englia, in whose employ he was, and bribing Bappoojee Sindea to march to her assistance, came upon and made the usurper prisoner, and sent him bound to Dehlee, and replaced the Begum in her own place,—and very ungratefully did she requite the obligation.

Pursuing his object of establishing an independent principality, he fixed upon the country or district of Hurriana, which from its peculiar position and nature, as well as the disturbed character of the times, had hitherto fallen a prey to every invader or adventurer of the age, yet could hardly be said to belong to any, and which therefore appeared best suited to his purpose.

In accordance with these views, having recruited his army and replenished his stores, he marched and commenced the enterprize by attacking the town and fort of Kanhoree, whose inhabitants were notorious thieves. His first attack was unsuccessful, being repulsed with the loss of 300 men; and the rains having come on and put an end to active operations, he turned the siege into a blockade, in which he suffered much from sallies of the enemy. On one of these occasions

he had a very narrow escape, being deserted by his men in a redoubt that was the object of the enemy's attack. The weather improving, however, his batteries were erected and worked with such effect that the garrison evacuated the place in the night. This being the stronghold of the country, he soon gained possession of the southern part of it; but it was much longer ere he was enabled to establish his authority so far north as the river Caggur.

Here, then, Mr. Thomas fixed himself, selecting for his capital the town of Hansi, ninety miles west of Dehlee, it being nearly in the centre of his newly-acquired domain. He rebuilt the walls and repaired the fortifications,—encouraged inhabitants to come and fill its depopulated streets, —established a mint, and coined his own money, —collected workmen and artificers of all sorts,— cast his own artillery, made matchlocks and muskets, gunpowder, and all the munitions of war; and made every effort possible for fixing himself permanently in his possessions, and for succeeding in what had for some time become his favourite, though unproclaimed object, namely, attempting the conquest of the Punjab, and, as he himself expresses it, "having the honour of planting

the BRITISH STANDARD on the banks of the ATTOCK."

The comparative smallness and uncertainty of Mr. Thomas's resources, however, forced him to have recourse to measures which he would gladly have avoided, but which were quite in the spirit of the times and country. He subsisted his troops upon the pillage of other countries; and though generally successful, he was occasionally involved in situations of difficulty and danger, from which it required all his ability and constitutional intrepidity to extricate himself. Once, in particular, he permitted himself against his own judgment to join with Wamun Rao in an expedition against the Jeypore territory, when the Rajah came upon their party with a large army; and, though defeated by the astonishing bravery and address of Mr. Thomas, he forced the invaders to retreat with severe loss. By a better regulated system of predatory warfare, however, the Rajah was at length forced into the payment of a regular "black mail," to purchase immunity and quiet for his country.

After a series of successful expeditions against Bikanere, and the Sikhs to the south of the Sutlege, Thomas joined his troops to those of

Ambajee Englia, and was employed against Luckwa Dada, who at this time was in arms against Sindea. On the march he gave a striking proof of his intrepid coolness and presence of mind, in quelling a mutiny among his troops, by personally seizing the leaders, and having one of them blown from a gun. But his engagement with Ambajee was soon brought to a close by a series of the same sort of unaccountable intrigue as had disgusted him with his first Mahratta employers; and he therefore left their army, and retired to his own territories about the end of 1799.

Of the subsequent enterprises of Thomas against Bikanere, Bhutnere, and the Sikhs of Pattialah, and other desert states, we shall only remark that they were constantly recurring, generally with success upon his part; and that he returned some time in 1800 to his own country, after a very various, active, and severe campaign, which he thus himself describes:*—

"Thus ended a campaign of seven months, in which I had been more successful than I could possibly have expected when I first took the field with a force consisting of 5,000 men, and

* Franklin, p. 215.

thirty-six pieces of cannon. I lost—in killed, wounded, and disabled—nearly one-third of my force; but the enemy lost 5,000 persons of all descriptions. I realized nearly 200,000 rupees, exclusive of the pay of my army, and was to receive an additional lakh for the hostages which were delivered up. I explored the country, formed alliances, and was, in short, *dictator* in all the countries belonging to the Sikhs south of the river Sutlege."

"But," continues the author of Thomas's life, "though Mr. Thomas's good fortune may at this period be said to have attained its meridian splendour, a dark cloud which had been gathering overhead was now preparing to discharge its malignant contents." This cloud was the displeasure or jealousy of Sindea, and his commander-in-chief, Perron, who saw with uneasiness the progress of a stranger and adventurer, in the midst of their territories, towards independent power. They had repeatedly offered him service, and invited him to act as commander of his private forces against their common enemies. But this Mr. Thomas had as constantly refused to do,—averring, that, as to serving with Perron, the natural enmity existing between an Englishman and a

Frenchman would always prevent that cordiality of co-operation so necessary to insure success. But he added, that if Sindea should choose to bestow upon him a separate command in the Dekhan, Hindostan, or the Punjab, he would willingly undertake it as soon as arrangements for payment of the troops should be completed.

Such offers and replies led at length to a more definite correspondence, and a negotiation, which, as it was conducted by Perron, was not likely to be favourable to Thomas's interests. But Sindea, with Holcar still in the field, was unwilling to engage in another contest, and therefore sought to temporize. An interview was at length agreed upon between Perron and Thomas, to take place at Bahadurghur. They met accordingly in September 1801, but with something of mutual distrust. Captain Felix Smith, of Perron's brigades, was sent to conduct Mr. Thomas to the Mahratta camp; and he came accompanied by two choice battalions and 300 cavalry.

But Perron's conditions soon brought matters to an issue. He proposed that Thomas should give up entirely his jaedad of Jyjur, and receive in lieu of it 50,000 rupees per month for payment of his battalions, and consider himself from

thenceforth as the servant of Sindea. This, which was but a repetition of offers which he had repeatedly declined before, excited Mr. Thomas's indignation; and, in order to avert further and more hostile discussion — perhaps even some attempt at treachery—he broke up the conference at once, and withdrew in disgust.

It appears extraordinary that the usually clear judgment of Mr. Thomas should not perceive that by such conduct he was throwing away the only rational chance remaining to him of realizing with greater certainty a high station as a soldier, than he could ever rationally hope to do by his own unaided resources, against the jealous enmity of the most potent princes in Hindostan—for it had been his fortune to be opposed to them all, and to have incurred their implacable displeasure. But visions of glory and supreme power appear to have blinded him, and possibly he may still have calculated something on the fickleness of purpose and strong international jealousies of the native powers. However that might be, all hopes of peace had vanished for the present, and Mr. Thomas returned to his own country to make preparations for resisting the storm which was about to burst upon him; while Perron, on his

side, made arrangements for securing his destruction—with what result, Skinner's narrative, to which, after this somewhat long digression, we now return, will show.

CHAPTER VIII.

Skinner's account of George Thomas — Meeting between Thomas and Perron — Negotiations broken off — Army assembles to besiege Georgeghur — Thomas's manœuvres — His battalions attacked — Arrival of Thomas at Georgeghur — Battle before that place — Severe loss on both sides — Interesting meeting between the brothers Skinner — Thomas's conduct after the battle — Cuts his way through Perron's army with 300 sowars — Reaches Hansee — Siege of that town — Intrigues — Desertions — Skirmishes — Storm of the town — Siege of the fort — Negotiations with Thomas — Capitulation — Meeting between Thomas and Bourquoin — Dinner at Bourquoin's tent — Strange fracas — Surrender of the fort — Thomas escorted to Anoopsheher — His character — And death.

"GEORGE THOMAS," says Skinner, "to whom Appa Khundoo Rao had given Hurriana,* had repaired the fort of Hansee; and having raised

* In this way of putting it, Skinner appears to be in a mistake, as may be seen by the sketch above given of Thomas's history.

eight battalions of infantry, with forty pieces of cannon, 1,000 Rohillas, and about 500 Sowars, he began to dart out with these troops, sometimes into the Bikanere country, sometimes into Jeypore, till, having accumulated some lakhs, he determined to attack the Sikhs and take their country from them. He marched as far as the Sutlege river, beat them wherever he met them, and made collections from their country; but he could make good no footing, nor could he take any of their large forts. He returned to Hansee, by the way of Sirhind, Kurnaul, and Paneeput. The Sikhs had assembled at Thanessur, and were very near cutting him to pieces; but he made his retreat good by some manœuvre and false promise. These chieftains then came to Perron, and solicited his assistance in destroying Thomas; and Sindea being referred to on the occasion, issued his orders for Perron to do so, they having agreed to become subsidiary, and having paid him five lakhs of rupees.

Perron, upon this, ordered the 3rd brigade, under Major Louis Bourquoin, and 5,000 regular horse, to proceed to Dehlee; and George Thomas was summoned to that place, to reply to the following proposals:—That he should enter into

Sindea's service, with a brigade of the same strength as those of ours—namely, eight battalions, 300 regular horse, 1,000 Rohillas, and 500 Mewattees, with forty pieces of cannon, for which he was to be allowed 60,000 rupees per month, either in money or jaedad. He was also to be permitted to keep Hurriana, provided he furnished other five battalions for the service. Should these proposals be rejected, he might prepare himself to fight.

Thomas agreed, and marched from Hansee on the 1st August 1801. Our brigade had arrived at Seetaramka-Serai, four côs west of Dehlee, and there encamped. Perron joined us by dak, and Thomas arrived on the 19th August, and encamped two miles distance in front of us. Several meetings took place between him and Perron, and he dined with us repeatedly, and all seemed to be going on well. We saw his troops, who looked well, but were not over-disciplined: his artillery was very fine, and the bullocks particularly good and strong. The only European officers he had, were Captains Hearsey, Hopkins, and Birch; and there were some Europeans acting as serjeants in his artillery.

About the 25th the treaty was broken off, as

Thomas would not agree to send four battalions of his brigade to Oojeine; so he was allowed to march back to his capital at Hansee, and both parties prepared to fight. Perron now sent the 3rd brigade, under Bourquoin, with a large battering train, and two thousand regular Hindostanee horse, to Bahadoorghur, where we encamped; and several Sikh chiefs received orders to assemble there. We remained here till the 10th September, during which time 6,000 Sikh horsemen came and joined us; and Perron went back to Alleeghur by dak. We next marched to Jyjur, within three côs of Georgeghur, a strong fort of Thomas's, where we learned that Thomas himself had marched towards the Sikh country. Three battalions, the battering train, and 100 horse, were now ordered to lay siege to Georgeghur, under command of Captain Smith; while the rest of the army went on to Jheind in pursuit of Thomas. We found, however, that he had moved off towards Futteabad, pretending that he was going to Pattialah. On this we marched in three days from Jheind to Kythull, where, on our arrival, we heard that Thomas had made a forced march and returned to Hansee. Thither we followed, but on the way

were informed that he had gone off to George-ghur. This was 44 côs* from Hansee, and Thomas had made this distance in two days, attacked Smith, and cut up one of his battalions.

It appeared that Smith, on hearing of Thomas being within five côs of him, had raised the siege and commenced his retreat, leaving this one battalion under command of a native, Poorun Sing, a brave old soldier, as a rear-guard. Thomas, with five of his battalions, overtook this single one; and while Smith, with the battering train, gained Jyjur, a fort belonging to us, Poorun Sing drew up his men, and a fierce fight took place. The brave old fellow charged the two first of Thomas's battalions which came up, and drove them off, capturing four pieces of cannon. Thomas himself then headed his five battalions, and came on, but was again repulsed. Unfortunately Poorun Sing was wounded, and fell from his horse, which threw the battalion into confusion; and as Smith, though only two miles distant, would not turn back, they all fell victims, being cut to pieces by Thomas.

Bourquoin had detached Lieutenant Ferdinand Smith, with all the horse, to support his brother,

* Fully sixty-six to seventy miles.

whom he reached in eighteen hours,* though the distance was one hundred côs; and we marched without halting, except two or three hours at a time to refresh the men and cattle, so that we reached Jyjur on the third day. There we halted for one day to rest, and next morning moved on to Baree, within two côs of Georgeghur. Bourquoin then went to reconnoitre the place, and I accompanied him. We found that Thomas had drawn up in one line, having Georgeghur on his right flank, and a large village, which he had fortified; on his left he had a small fort, or ghurree, in which he had stationed 1,000 Rohillas and four pieces of cannon. His rear was likewise defended by a large village.

At three P.M. we moved to the attack, in open columns of companies, except two battalions and two eighteen-pounders, with some horse, which were sent to try his rear. Having come within gunshot we formed line, under a heavy cannonade of thirty-five pieces. The cavalry were on our flanks, but took good care to keep out of cannon reach. Our right had come into a line

* There must be some error here, as 150 miles in eighteen hours, with cavalry, is impossible; but it is given as in the original.

with Thomas's left, when the word was given to wheel into line, and thus we moved to the attack.

Both parties fought well, and disputed the day with great courage. About four P.M. we came within musket range, but found that Thomas had thrown up sand-banks* in his front, which brought our line to a halt. Both musketry and cannon now showered on us like hail, and the men began to fall by hundreds. Two of Thomas's battalions now moved out in columns of companies, under command of Captain Hopkins, a gallant officer. They formed just in front of our left wing, and gave their fire exactly as if they had been at a review: when all had formed, they gave a volley and came to the charge, which completely succeeded in driving back our left wing. However, our golundauze kept to their guns; and the gallant Hopkins having his leg shot off by one of our six-pounders, whilst advancing at the charge, the battalion gave way as soon as he fell, and ran back, taking their leader along with them. Our left wing then rallied and resumed their position, but the fire was so murderous that our whole line was ordered to sit down; as for Thomas's men,

* This deadened the cannon-shot, so that it buried itself without recochetting.

they were sheltered by the sand hillocks in his front.

In this way we remained till night; for neither could Thomas come out to attack us, nor could we attack him. At sunrise we hung out a flag of truce; the firing ceased, and we were allowed to clear the field, which took us till twelve at noon. The flag was then pulled down, and we retired out of cannon reach. But Thomas was so well sickened that he would not follow up the blow.

This was the severest battle I had ever seen; our troops were nearly equal as to infantry—we had each about 8,000 men. Thomas had thirty-five pieces of cannon, we twenty-eight; the cavalry did not come into play. Our loss in killed and wounded was between 3,000 and 4,000; out of seven European officers we had two killed, namely Lieutenants Smith and M'Culloch, and two wounded, Captains Oliver and Rabells. Twenty-five of our tumbrils were blown up by the enemy's shot, and fifteen of our guns dismounted. Thomas had about 2,000 killed and wounded, and Captain Hopkins, who died of his wounds. Had Thomas possessed another officer like him, he would have gained the day.

An interesting circumstance occurred after this

battle which Skinner does not mention, but which many of his friends have heard him tell with great effect. His brother Robert was likewise in this action, though separated from him at a considerable distance; so that neither brother knew how the other had fared. The cannonade was so fierce and continuous, and the slaughter so great, that all was smoke and carnage, and there was little communication between the different parts of the field. When it ceased, however, a report came to Skinner that his brother had been killed; while a similar one reached Robert, as to James. Both, moved by one impulse, ran to the bloody field, without thinking of refreshment or rest, and sought all over it for the body of their brother; but in the darkness, amongst the thousands of corpses torn and mutilated by the cannon shot, none found what he sought, and after a weary and fruitless search, they each returned to the tent of their commanding officer to make their report. By a singular chance they entered from opposite sides at the same moment, and the first thing that met their eyes was the object on which their thoughts were dwelling. They saw nothing else, and the reader may conceive with what feelings they ran and embraced, calling out each

other's names, before the officers that filled the tent.

Skinner here proceeds to criticize the conduct of Thomas, which in truth did not appear consistent with his general decision and gallantry. "We had always heard," he says, "that Thomas was a brave, active, and clever soldier, and an able general; but we were surprised that he now permitted us to remain for fifteen days without attempting to attack us, or to make good his retreat to Hansee, for there was no doubt on our minds that, had he tried either plan, he would have succeeded. The state of our guns, and the spirits of our soldiery, was such, that had Thomas shown any inclination to move towards us, we should have got out of his reach; for our commander, Major Lewis Bourquoin, was not only a coward but a fool. He was one of those who had got on by flattery; and, had it not been for Captain Burnear, a Frenchman, we should certainly have lost the day, for the Major was not seen at all during the battle,—and our being saved from total destruction was entirely owing to the exertions of Captain Burnear, who was a brave and able soldier.

Thomas now gave up all the management to

Captain Hearsey, who joined him a few days after the battle, and to his native officers, while he himself took to drinking. These officers, instead of inducing him to retreat to his capital, began to fortify his camp, and gave out that some refractory Mahrattas were coming to their assistance. Reinforcements now began to join us from various quarters. Colonel Pedron came with five battalions of the 4th brigade, two battalions were sent by the Begum Sumroo, and Perron sent five battalions from Hessing's brigade, at Agra; and horsemen to the amount of 5,000 also came to join the force, so that Thomas was completely surrounded.

Skirmishes now took place every day, but he was always thrashed back into his lines. Supplies and forage began to get scarce; his soldiers became dissatisfied, and began to desert. One of his chieftains, named Shitaub Khan, who commanded the fort of Georgeghur, was enticed over by Pedron, and informed us that the troops, having been for two days without grain, were living on sheep and bullocks; so that Thomas must either give in at once, or make a start with his horse to Hansee. On this, Pedron immediately hoisted a flag, and proclaimed that all soldiers

taking refuge under it should get quarter. About 200 came over that day, and we were ordered to get within cannon reach, and to keep on the alert at night.

About nine at night on the 10th November, Thomas, with 300 of his brave horsemen, made a dart through the five battalions commanded by Colonel Hessing; and, although the whole of the cavalry was sent in pursuit, he made good his escape to Hansee from Georgeghur, about sixty miles, in fourteen hours. All his guns and camp were taken, and his soldiers having laid down their arms, were offered service, but they refused it with contempt. They all appeared very much attached to him, and several native officers, who had been a long time in his service, rent their clothes and turned beggars, swearing that they never would serve as soldiers again. Captains Hearsey and Birch, and two other Europeans, went along with him.

Pedron completed the 3rd brigade from the five battalions of the 4th, which he had brought with him from Alleeghur; but it was unfortunately Bourquoin under whom we were ordered to attack Hansee. The 3rd brigade, with a large battering train, 500 regular Hindostanee horse, and about

5,000 Sikhs, marched for that place, while Pedron went back to Alleeghur.

When we reached Sewannee, seven côs south-east of Hansee, we received information that Thomas had choked up all the wells within six côs round the place. Bursee, four côs in our front, had five pukha wells; and Hansee was three côs distant from Bursee. I was ordered, with two battalions and all the pioneers, to clear out one of these wells,—and this I effected in two days; after which, the troops marched, and all the rest were cleared out. We discovered, too, that the little tanks of water near Hansee had been defiled with pork and beef.

Bourquoin reconnoitred the fort several times, and formed his plan of attack. Thomas had still about 5,000 foot and 200 horse, with two 24, four 12, and six 6-pounder guns; and he had fortified strongly three outworks, about a hundred yards from the town. One to the south-east, at the Bursee gate, was defended by sixty men; another at the Kootub gate, to the south, by 100 men; and one on the west, towards Hissar, with 200 men.

At three in the morning, Bourquoin ordered these three works to be attacked. Two bat-

talions, under Lieut. Mackenzie, were directed to assault that towards the Bursee gate; two others, under my command, to that at the Kootub gate; while Captain Bunnear, with two more, was ordered to that at the Hissar gate. We arrived at our destination near daybreak, and led on our respective columns. Mackenzie and I both succeeded without much trouble, the enemy's parties running into the town. But Captain Bunnear having got between his outwork and the town, and thus cutting off their retreat, the men resisted obstinately, and beat back the party. Bunnear rallied them, but in so doing was killed in the ditch,—on which his men rushed on, carried the place, and put the whole of the enemy's party to the sword. On our side the whole loss did not exceed 200 men in killed and wounded, but the death of Bunnear was much felt in all our circle, and especially by the soldiery.

These three works were fixed as points for our trenches, and between them three batteries were ordered to be erected. During the siege of the town nothing was done to interrupt us by Thomas, though the garrison kept up their fire from musketry and cannon pretty well. The battering guns then opened, and the walls of the

town being breached, three parties of 1,500 men were told off for the storm. One was under command of Lieut. Mackenzie; a second under command of my brother, Lieut. Skinner; and the third under my own.

At dawn of day, on the 3rd December, the signal of attack was given. Mackenzie was opposed to Captain Hearsey: my brother to a native, Ellias Beg; and I had to contend with Captain Birch. Both Mackenzie and my brother made good their way in, after some resistance; but Birch, who defended his post well, beat me back twice with great loss. Burning choppers, powder-pots, and everything he could get hold of, were showered upon us; but our greatest loss was from the powder-pots, which greatly disheartened the men: however, after a desperate struggle, I drove them from the breach. Just as I had got up, I saw Birch about twenty yards from me taking aim at me with a double-barrelled gun, the contents of which, both barrels, he fired at me; but "the sweet little cherub" saved me from them. I immediately levelled my javelin, and, putting my shield to my breast, darted it at him, and took off his hat,—on which he set off and joined his men, who were now leaving the

wall, and retreated about 200 yards behind houses.

All my storming party had now got in, and we moved towards the *chowk* or centre of the bazaar, where we saw our columns. The fight now became desperate. Thomas had come down from the fort with 1,000 of his chosen men, and, attacking the column commanded by Lieutenant Skinner, drove it back to the walls of the town. I immediately hastened to my brother's assistance, and beat Thomas back to the gate of the fort.

All our columns having now joined in the chowk, Thomas made another attempt, bringing up a 6-pounder, and, after great resistance, drove us out of the chowk. We were then joined by our reserve of a battalion, with a couple of 6-pounders, and, in spite of a very obstinate resistance by Thomas, drove him back to the fort. About noon we had complete possession of the town; but it cost us dear, as the slaughter on our side was very great, for several times we had come to the sword (that is, hand to hand with the sword). My brother got a cut at Thomas, but his armour had saved him. We lost, in killed and wounded, 1,600 men. Lieutenant Mackenzie was wounded,

and several of our native officers were killed and wounded.

Bourquoin, soon after, arrived with 3,000 dismounted troopers and two battalions, who took up our position, and we were allowed to go to the rear to refresh ourselves. Next morning the guns moved into the town, our trenches were commenced within 200 yards of the fort, and a battery of eight 18-pounders was erected in the centre of the chowk. Thomas, on his side, made every preparation to defend the fort; but, in consequence of the losses he had sustained, his men were dispirited and little to be depended on. The siege was, however, carried on with great spirit on both sides: several sallies were made upon our trenches, and sometimes Thomas drove us out, at others we gave him a proper thrashing. But our battering guns produced no effect, for the fort of Hansee being a solid mound of earth, the balls merely buried themselves in it, without in the least shaking the rampart.

In consequence, we commenced mining, and advanced to within ten yards of the crown work —called, in Hindostanee, *goongas;* when Bourquoin began to intrigue with Thomas's men, and wrote them letters promising them six months'

pay and permanent service if they would give up the fort and Thomas. These letters were rolled upon arrows, and shot into the fort from our trenches, and they were answered in the same way by Thomas's men, who agreed to give him up, but said there was some misunderstandings among themselves; but, as soon as the parties should unite, due notice of it should be sent.

Thomas was not ignorant of these intrigues, and kept himself on his guard. He had still about 1,500 faithful and trustworthy soldiers, who were posted with himself in the inner fort. On our side, Bourquoin was the only French officer, the rest were country-borns and English, who felt indignant at this underhand treachery, and agreed that it would be disgraceful if through such intrigues Thomas should be taken prisoner and put into confinement; for Bourquoin had declared in bravado that so he would use that blackguard Englishman when he got hold of him. This was language which we did not admire; but knowing Bourquoin to be more of a talker than a doer, we managed to persuade him into offering terms, assuring him that he would himself gain a higher name by inducing Thomas to capitulate than by catching him by treachery. It was one day after

tiffin, when the wine he had drunk had put him in high spirits and good humour, that we plied him thus, and at last he called out, in his broken English, "Well, gentlemen, you do as you like—I give power; he be one damn Englishman, your countryman, that treat their children very ill." He meant that the country-borns were very ill used in not being admitted into the Company's service.

We lost no time in making use of this power, but sent Captain Smith into the fort to treat with Thomas. That gentleman received him with great joy, and told him of the treachery that was brewing among his men; on which Smith said that he was sent by the whole English officers (meaning European and country-borns) to save him from dishonour. Thomas thanked him, and begged he would return and say that he would accept of any terms the officers should make for him. With this reply Smith returned; and, after some trouble, we prevailed on Bourquoin to grant the following terms,—namely:—That Thomas should be permitted to go free, with all his private property—that is, ready money, wearing apparel, shawls, jewels, and all household stuff; and that one of our battalions should escort him

safe to the Company's territory. That his soldiers should be allowed to march out with their private arms, but that all arms belonging to Thomas should be left in the fort.

These conditions being signed by Bourquoin, Smith was sent next morning with them into the fort, and Thomas was glad to agree to them. It was settled that the fort should be given up in two days; and, meantime, a cessation of hostilities on both sides was proclaimed. A meeting took place between Thomas and Bourquoin, at the bungalow of the former, on the bank of the Umtee tank; and all the officers, except myself, who was left in command of the trenches, were permitted to go and see him. He received them all very courteously, and was particularly gracious to my brother, whom he embraced, and showed him the cut he had received from him on his belt. After spending two hours together, during which time Bourquoin and he became great friends, he returned to the fort.

Bourquoin then invited him to dine with us all on the 21st, which Thomas agreed to; and all the officers were permitted to come to dine in camp, the trenches being left under charge of the native officers. Hearsey and Birch spent the whole day

with us, talking of our various exploits; but it was about seven in the evening when Thomas arrived with about fifty of his sowars, much affected, as it appeared, by his misfortunes. About eight we sat down; and, after dinner, did all we could to cheer Thomas, taking great care to avoid all conversation about our attacks, or anything that might give him offence. By eleven o'clock all of us had got pretty merry with drinking bumpers to such toasts as "General Perron," "George Thomas," &c., and Thomas was quite happy; when, all of a sudden, Bourquoin called out—"Let us drink to the success of Perron's arms." At this we all turned up our glasses; and Thomas, on hearing and seeing this, burst into tears, and, putting his hand to his sword, called out to Bourquoin that it was not to him but to his own ill fate that his fall was due, and (drawing his sword)—"One Irish sword," said he, "is still sufficient for a hundred Frenchmen." Bourquoin, in terror at this, jumped from his chair, and ran out of the tent, calling out for his guard. Then Thomas's sowars, hearing the hubbub, also rushed in; and we, apprehensive of a row, called out to them to keep off, as it was only the sahib that was drunk: while Thomas, in the midst

of us, kept waving his sword, and calling out in Hindostanee to look how he had made the d——d Frenchman run like a jackall! It was not without much persuasion, and no small fear of some accident, that we got Thomas at last to sheath his sword. We then got the soldiers out of the tent; and, when Thomas had sat down, we explained to him that the wine had made Bourquoin forget himself, but that he must not regard it as an insult, but agree to make it up. To this he at once consented; and, going to seek Bourquoin, we brought him in, and he immediately shook Thomas's hand, and told him he was sorry for what he had said.

A few more glasses now went round; and, perceiving that they were getting still more "jolly," being captain of the day in the trenches, I rode off to the town, and cautioned the men not to *challenge* Thomas's sowars, for that their master was drunk. About midnight Thomas arrived by the Bursee gate, where there was a guard of a naik and six sepoys, whom I had omitted to caution; so, when he came close, the sentinel challenged. Thomas's man replied "Sahib Bahaudoor," as he was usually called by his men. The sentinel replied that he knew of no Sahib

Bahaudoor, so that he must stop until he got permission from his officer to pass. Thomas, who was much in liquor, now turned round to his sowars, and said—"Could any one have stopped Sahib Bahaudoor at this gate but one month ago?" "No, no," replied they; on which he dismounted, drew his sword, and making a cut at the poor sentinel, smote off his right hand. Up got the guard immediately on this, and gave the alarm; but, fortunately, I was only a few yards distant from the gate, and on hearing the noise ran up. There I found Thomas walking up and down with his naked sword in his hand, and Hearsey and several of his sowars, who had dismounted, endeavouring to lay hold of him. At length a rissaldar, named Meer Mahummudee, caught hold of him from behind, when the rest ran in, and taking his sword from him, sent for his palankeen, and had him carried into the fort. Next morning, having come to himself, Hearsey told him what he had done, on which he sent for the soldier he had wounded, and gave him 500 rupees. He also wrote an apology to Bourquoin, expressing his concern for what had happened.

On the 29th Thomas marched out, and encamped near us; and on the 1st of January he

marched with a battalion of ours, under Captain Smith, who escorted him safe to Anoopsheher. He carried with him about a lakh and a half of rupees in ready cash, and above a lakh more in shawls, jewels, and other property.

A few words more will suffice to conclude the history of this remarkable man, whose enterprise and energy seemed to merit a happier fate. In the middle of January 1802 he reached the English frontier; and having inspected the state of his funds, and the wreck of his property, he found himself possessed of no more than might suffice to procure the decent comforts of life in his native country, whither it was his intention to retire. But this was not granted to him. He left the upper provinces, and, after a residence of some time at Benares, was proceeding down the river, when illness, probably brought on by his late severe exertions and exposure, arrested his progress near the military cantonments of Berhampore,—and there he died, and there he lies buried.

Thomas, at this time only forty-six years of age, is described as of a tall and martial figure, and great strength of body; of bold features and erect carriage, not unexpressive of that vigour of

mind and intrepidity of spirit which enabled him to conceive, and qualified him to achieve, those designs which it was the object of his ambition to accomplish. Amongst these, his favourite schemes were the conquest of the Punjab, and of the countries extending down the Indus, on both of which he gave detailed and digested plans for the consideration of the British government. Nor were his intentions selfish; on the contrary, he desired but to be the instrument of conquest for his country. "I have nothing in view by this plan," said he, "but the welfare of my king and my country; it could not be concerted and prepared in time to aid me in the approaching conflict,* and therefore it is not to aggrandize myself that I have thought of it; but I shall be sorry to see my conquests fall into the hands of the Mahrattas; I wish to give them to my king, and to serve him during the remainder of my days,—and this I can only do as a soldier in this part of the world."

Thomas was intimately acquainted with the spirit and character of the natives of India, and eminently qualified to guide and command them.

* With the Mahratta powers, which at that time was brewing.

His military talents may be estimated from the history of his actions; and his ability in providing resources in the hour of need were most remarkable. His manners were grave and gentle, and his courtesy to all evinced a general wish to please. He was frank, generous, and humane; and though subject to sudden ebullitions of temper, in which he occasionally committed acts of which he soon repented, and as soon atoned for, his conduct to the families of those who fell or were disabled in his service, is a convincing proof of the benevolence and philanthropy of his heart; and the devoted attachment of his personal followers and chosen soldiers is the best evidence of their appreciation of his character.

CHAPTER IX.

Skinner goes on leave to see his father—Rejoins his brigade within the twelvemonth—Accompanies Perron to Oojein—Reception of Perron by Sindea — His life or liberty treacherously attempted—Disgusted, he resigns the service —Returns to Alleeghur—Rumours of misunderstanding with the English—Confirmed—Perron's plan for a campaign against the English—Sketch of the state and respective forces of the belligerents—British subjects (officers) refuse to serve against the English— Discharged from the Mahratta service in consequence — Arrive at Lord Lake's head-quarters—Lord Lake's reception of Skinner—Insincerity of Perron and the French officers— His specious demonstrations of resistance—Jealousies in the Mahratta camp—Perron flies to Agra—Lord Lake assaults and takes Alleeghur—Five companies of sepoys surprised by M. Fleurea—Fleurea surrenders to Lord Lake—Intrigues of Bourquoin—And of Perron—Perron surrenders to Lord Lake, and is courteously received— Battle of Dehlee—Skinner is appointed to a charge of irregular horse.

"ABOUT the 25th of January," continues Skinner, "after placing a battalion, as garrison, in the

fort, we marched to Futteeabad, in order to settle the Bhuttee country, while I, having received a letter from my father at Berhampore, desiring that I should come and see him, applied to Perron for leave to do so. This being granted, I left the brigade at Futteeabad on the 15th of February, and marched to Cawnpore. From thence I embarked, in a budjerow, for Berhampore, and joined my father in the end of April. After spending a couple of months with him, I went to Calcutta to see my sister, Mrs. Templeton, and then returned to Berhampore for another month. On the 1st of July I took leave of my father, and rejoined General Perron, at Coel, in January 1803: at my own request I was posted to the second brigade; and having received command of my old regiment, joined them in the country of Meerut.

Perron was now sent for by Sindea to Oojeine, and ordered the second brigade to accompany him. He joined us at Khoshalghur, with 500 sowars, and from thence we reached Oojeine on the 20th of March. His reception here was not of a nature to gratify an officer like Perron. It was not until the 25th that he was invited to call on the Maha Raja; and then, having proceeded

to the Durbar with 200 horsemen, he was kept waiting in the kutchery (or office) at the gate for two hours, while Sindea was amusing himself by flying kites. Not a chieftain came out to meet him, while he sat in company with certain discontented chiefs of note, among whom was old Gopaul Rao Bhow, who was at the head of the army. This officer, addressing Perron, said, "Observe to what the old Pateil's reign has come: good soldiers are all forgotten,—none but dirty time-servers and flatterers can get on; but mark my words, he will soon find out his error, but not until too late to mend it." To this Perron replied, that he was but a servant, and all he knew was to obey. This sort of conversation went on until the Choleedars announced the approach of Sindea, when we all rose, and Perron went up and presented his nuzzur. Sindea just touched it, and asked him if he was well; to which Perron made the usual reply of "by your favour"; and then we all, in turn, presented our nuzzurs, and were desired to sit down.

In half an hour Sindea dismissed the Durbar, and desired Perron to return to camp, which he did, completely disgusted with the cold and slighting treatment he had received from his master.

Eight days now passed without the slightest notice or message from Sindea to Perron; and Gopaul Rao, a great friend of the latter, signified to him that he had best be on his guard, as the Maha Raja had resolved to lay hold of him. Several secret visits passed at this time between Perron and Gopaul Rao, whilst Colonel Sutherland and Major Brownrigg were intriguing against the former.

Perron, aware of the intrigues of his enemies, became depressed and perturbed; when, at length, matters seemed likely to be brought to a crisis. A day was appointed for holding a durbar, to which Perron and all his European officers were invited. At this durbar Sindea, together with his father-in-law, Surjee Rao Ghatkea, had formed a plot to lay hold of him; and had employed 500 Pathans, belonging to Bahadour Khan (a chief then at Malaghur), and several others of his own favourites—his companions in vice and debauchery—to carry this purpose into effect.

Perron, however, was made aware of this plot, and ordered all the native officers of both brigades, as low as the rank of jemadar, as well as all the European officers, to come fully armed to attend his visit to Sindea. Our full uniform

included a brace of pistols attached to our sword-belts, and these he directed us to bring loaded. We amounted in all to 300 native and thirty European officers; and in this state of preparation we marched to the durbar, a large tent pitched for the occasion.

At the hour of nine in the morning, headed by Perron, we reached the tent. Sindea rose to receive us, and we all presented our nuzzurs. We were then directed to sit down on the left side of the presence, the right being occupied by the Pathans, who regarded us very fiercely. When we were seated, Sindea, turning to Perron, observed that the invitation had only been extended to himself and his European officers, to which Perron replied, that in arranging his suite he had only followed the old rule laid down by himself and his uncle; and this answer silenced him. All this time we sat quiet, eyeing each other, whilst much whispering went on between Sindea, Gopaul Rao, and Surjee Rao. I believe it was Gopaul Rao who persuaded him not to attempt any violence, for that not only himself, but the whole party would be cut to pieces by the fine body of men whom Perron had brought in.

Sindea then ordered the Pathans to retire, and they all got up, looking at us as if they would eat us, while our men sat laughing at them with the most perfect unconcern. When they were gone, Sindea and Surjee Rao began to flatter, and endeavour to throw him off his guard; but he, assisted as he was by his old friend Gopaul Rao, was too old a soldier to be so cajoled; and so khiluts were ordered for us all, and after receiving them we presented our nuzzurs, which he graciously accepted. Betel was then handed round, and we received leave to retire.

Perron then got up, and taking off his sword, laid it down at Sindea's feet, saying that he had grown old in his service, and that it did not become him to be disgraced by dissolute knaves and bullies; that all he wanted was his discharge. Then, addressing us, he said, that henceforth we must look to Sindea, for that he, for his part, was too old now to brook affronts, and must retire. Sindea, on this, rose and embraced Perron, telling him that he regarded him as his uncle, and that he had no idea what had offended him. Compliments without measure passed between both parties, but, on taking leave, Perron cautioned Sindea to beware of Surjee Rao Ghatkea, for he

would be his ruin,—a caution in which all the old Mahratta chiefs joined cordially, and applauded the part which Perron had taken.

At length we returned to camp, where several days were occupied in the transmission of messages to and from the court, and in visits from chieftains who were sent to make matters up. But Perron was too indignant to be pacified. Colonel Sutherland, in the mean time, was sent to the 2nd brigade, and Colonel Pholman to the 1st, while Major Brownrigg was put in arrest under fixed bayonets. On the 15th of April, Perron marched with the 2nd brigade, having requested Sindea to send Ambajee to take charge of the troops in Hindostan, to which I believe he agreed.

On the 1st of June we arrived at Alleeghur, Perron still persisting in his purpose of retiring from the service, and Ambajee being appointed commander-in-chief, or soobah, of Hindostan. Our brigade was now ordered to cantoon at Secundra, near Dehlee, when news arrived that Holcar had defeated the Peishwah, and cut up four battalions of our 1st brigade, under command of Captain Dawes, at Poona. The Peishwah, thus situated, had flown to the English for

protection, and the whole Mahratta empire was thrown into the greatest agitation. Rumours came from Sindea's camp of disagreements between himself and the English Resident, and alarms of an English war began to be spread. Great preparations took place in all the armies; and Sindea, in these circumstances, succeeded in persuading Perron to remain a year longer in the service.

About the 1st of July, it became publicly known that Sindea and almost all the native powers had fallen out with the English. The 4th brigade was now completed, and sent to join Sindea at Oojeine. Perron, on his part, made great preparations at Alleeghur. His plan for acting against the English was as follows:— Gholaum Mahomed, the Rohilla chief, was engaged to commence in the Katahoor, and overrun the country towards Lucknow; while Umbajee, with all his horse, should cross at Cawnpore, and march down to Allahabad. The brigades under Perron's command were to assemble at Dehlee; while Perron himself, with about 20,000 horse, composed of his own regular cavalry, the Sikh chief's contingent, and all the horse belonging to the petty Rajahs of the Doab, were to

occupy that country, and harass the British troops forming at Cawnpore under Lord Lake. The Mahrattas were to hoist the King's imperial colours. Sindea, with all his own forces, undertook to watch and harass General Wellesley in the Dekhan. The battalions of the Nagpore Rajah were to march through the Rewah country towards Calcutta, each commander being instructed to burn and destroy everything in their course in the countries through which they passed.

Although it is not the purpose of this narrative to enter on the wide subject of the Mahratta war of 1803, it may interest the reader to learn here generally, what the condition and relative force of the respective parties was, at least in Hindostan, where Skinner himself was exclusively engaged. The Mahratta princes themselves were so utterly at variance, that little of combination was to be looked for among them; the hereditary enmity between Sindea and Holcar prevented any coalition on their part; and it was the growing power and hostility of Holcar that had led the Peishwah to seek the assistance of the English government, and which led to the famous treaty of Bassein. Thus the principal confederates against the Eng-

lish were, Dowlut Rao Sindea, and Rughoojee Bhounslah, with Shumshere Bahaudur, and their forces have been estimated as follows, on the authorities followed by Mill, Grant Duff, and other historians.

Sindea and Rughoojee together, had about 100,000 men, of whom 50,000 were Mahratta horse, generally good; 30,000 regular infantry and artillery, commanded by Europeans; the rest were half disciplined troops belonging to Rughoojee. Sindea is understood to have had more than 500 pieces of cannon, all in excellent order, and manned by stanch artillerists. Shumshere Bahaudur's troops have been estimated at 10,000 to 12,000 men of all sorts.

Of these, the army of Hindostan, under Perron's command, consisted of 16,000 to 17,000 regular infantry, and from 15,000 to 20,000 horse, with the usual proportion of artillery, not less than twenty pieces. To oppose this force, Lord Lake had but 10,500 men, all ready to march, at Cawnpore, besides which, 3,500 under his orders were stationed at Allahabad, to oppose Shumshere Bahaudur. It is to be remarked, that though Holcar had not as yet joined the Mahratta confederacy against the British, and that the Raje-

poot princes had taken no active part in what was going on, there is little doubt that had the British been unfortunate at the outset, they would soon have had these additional powers to cope with, as well as the Sikhs of the Punjab and the states of the Desert, which would have added a force of 100,000 more men to that of their present enemies. From this it may be judged how critical our situation at this time was, how important to our very existence in India, that success should attend every effort of our arms from the first, and how invaluable were the gallant services of those brave men who secured it to their country, and wrestled it from such fearful odds.

On the 28th of August, a most important change took place in the condition of all the English and country-born officers in the service of Sindea. Captain Stewart,* a country-born, and Captain Carnegie, a Scotchman, having signified that they would not serve against the English, all of us, nine in number, were summarily

* A very amiable and accomplished person, son to General Stewart, of the Honourable East India Company's service, long since dead. The writer remembers well his account of these transactions.

dismissed, our arrears were paid up, and we were ordered to quit the Mahratta country. This was a most unexpected blow to many of us, but there was no help for it. My brother went off to the Begum Sumroo, and I, with five more country-borns, resolved to go to Sindea himself to seek redress. On the 29th we arrived at Alleeghur, just as General Lake was marching up with his army. Perron had made a show of hostilities with his cavalry, but they quickly dispersed, and General Lake encamped before the fort. For our parts, we found ourselves surrounded all in a garden near the Sasnee gate of Coel, from whence in the evening we went to General Lake, and were very kindly received.

Captains Stewart and Carnegie were, as Skinner remarks, the first of the officers who tendered to Perron their resignation, declaring that they could not fight against the British arms,—a measure which enraged Perron so much, that he gave a general discharge to all British and British country-borns in the service. Skinner and several others remonstrated against this, but in vain; and having been warned not to be found within reach of the Mahratta camp after a certain

time, he went off, with four others, to Agra, whither he had previously sent his family. On the day of the battle of Alleeghur, he and his companions had pitched in a garden, on the way thither, during the heat of the sun, when, hearing of the battle, Skinner proposed still to go to Perron, to press their remonstrances in person, and declare their intention of sticking by him to the last. But by-and-bye they saw some of the Mahratta horse passing by in a disorderly manner, and in a little Perron himself, in confusion, without his hat. Skinner went up to him immediately, and told him that he had come to remonstrate against his dismissal, and had determined to remain and share his fortunes. "Ah! no, no!" replied Perron,—"it is all over; these fellows" (the horse) "have behaved ill: do not ruin yourself, go over to the British; it is all up with us." "By no means," replied Skinner; "it is not so; let us rally yet, and make a stand,—you may depend upon having many yet to fight for you." But Perron still shook his head, and after a little said, in his bad English, "Ah, no, Monsieur Skinner,—I not trust—I not trust; I fraid you all go." Skinner, on this, got angry, and retorted, saying, that in that case it was *he* that was

the traitor, if he meant to proceed in that way; if, on account of one or two ingrates, he should lose to his master the services of many faithful persons, this was the way to ruin the cause; but that, if he persevered in doing all for the best, no doubt he might still hold the country and effectively serve his master. But Perron, who had made up his mind upon the matter, still refused to have anything more to do either with him or any of his brother officers; on which Skinner declared he would go to Sindea himself and complain. Perron answered impatiently, and biding no further parley, shook his head, and rode off, saying, "Good-bye, Monsieur Skinner; — no trust—no trust." "Then you may go to the devil!" roared Secunder, and rode back to the garden, where he related all that had happened to his comrades, saying that he was resolved to go to Sindea and relate to him the whole case.

Skinner had, in fact, at this time not the smallest idea of entering the British service, or even leaving that of Sindea: he was a complete native,—sought nothing better than to live and die in the service he had been brought up in. He had no tie to Britain; his father was dead, his brother provided for in the Begum Soomroo's

service; he knew little or nothing of his other relatives, and was himself a soldier of fortune—at large, and free to choose for himself—and he desired to stick to the colours he had hitherto served under.

Carnegie, a sensible man, who was one of the party, then came forward:—"No," said he, "Sindea would never place any confidence; we should be suspected by all, and there would be an end to all promotion, if not to safety. Let us seek for protection from the British commander, who will be glad to afford it to us." Long did Skinner oppose this plan, for he did not then know his countrymen, and reposed little confidence in British faith; but at last he gave in, and they all proceeded to a fort near at hand, in possession of the British, there to demand protection.

They were met by an officer (named Clark) who had command at the gate, and who told them, somewhat rudely, they could have no protection there, and that they had better go on to the camp. They left him, in considerable indignation at the treatment they had received, and, on proceeding, were overtaken by, or overtook a gentleman, attended by two orderlies, who, seeing

they were strangers, inquired who they were. On being informed that they were Mahratta officers, who had quitted the service and were seeking protection, he also said he could do nothing for them, and that they should go to the camp of the commander-in-chief, who alone could give them an answer. They then mentioned the repulse they had already met with, and begged that a soldier might be sent to secure them a better reception, which, without such an introduction, they feared might not be afforded them. This, Colonel Everard Brown, for he it was, somewhat ungraciously, as they thought, refused to do; telling them, rather cavalierly, to find their way as they best could. On this they left him, and Skinner, complimenting Carnegie upon the politeness of his countrymen, led the way towards their tents. Carnegie, a little piqued, said he would at least make one more trial; and taking with him Ferguson, another of their comrades, rode on to the British camp. Near this they were met by Captain ——, who, having inquired who they were, received them very kindly, and took them into camp. He then inquired whether they did not require some food, as they looked exhausted; and then said he would

take them to Lord Lake, the commander-in-chief. When they were refreshed, he inquired after the two Skinners, who, he said, were sons of his particular friend; and hearing James was of their party, he sent a letter off immediately, to request, in the most urgent manner, that he would come to him at once.

This letter overtook Skinner just as the sun was going down; and, though he put little faith in its professions, it induced him to delay his departure; and soon afterwards came Carnegie and Ferguson, hurraing, and calling out to him that they had now found out the right way. Still it was with difficulty they persuaded him to go to the camp, very dubious as to the event. When they reached it, they were first introduced to Lord Lake, who received them with great good will and kindness; and were then ushered into the mess-room, where they dined, and met with so much attention as seemed to them perfectly marvellous,—in short, they were as capitally treated as they had at first thought themselves ill-used.

Next morning, after breakfasting at mess, they were again taken to Lord Lake; and then Skinner's doubts recommenced, for, on being asked

which of them was the senior officer, he was at once pointed out as such by the rest. He was then questioned particularly as to the force and numbers of Perron's troops, on which Skinner was by no means disposed to be communicative, and he confined himself to such matters as were easily to be discovered without betraying what might be regarded as secrets. After some time, he was asked if he would take service, and raise a troop of horse in English pay. But this he at once and decidedly refused,—for he never, he said, could fight against his old comrades, nor draw sword against Sindea or Perron. He was then requested to write to the different officers serving under Perron, and to inform them that, if they came over, they should receive favourable terms. This he declined doing, assuring those who proposed it that it would be perfectly useless —they never would come over, or believe him; moreover, he warned them that, if messengers were sent with such letters, their lives would not be safe. His comrades, however, did not see the same difficulties; and at length he, as well as they, did write some letters, which were accordingly sent. But the hucarrahs who carried those of his comrades were put to death; while the

general attachment felt for Skinner's name proved the safety of his messenger.

The result of this experiment, and of a longer acquaintance with Skinner, was, that he became a great favourite with Lord Lake, who consulted him much on all occasions; while so greatly prepossessed was Skinner himself by the affability and kindness of his lordship, that he attached himself very sincerely to his person and the service,—insomuch that, after the battle of Dehlee, little more than a fortnight after his joining the camp near Alleeghur, we find him accepting the command of a body of horse, on the express stipulation that he was never to be employed against his old master, Sindea. This command took its origin in the coming over of a body of Perron's horse, after the dispersion of Bourquoin's force at Dehlee. These, when they were asked whom they would choose for their commander, with one voice said, that if the "Burrah Secunder" was there, he was the man. He was accordingly employed, as will be seen, in keeping the Doab open until the war with Holcar commenced, when he became again more actively engaged.

One anecdote, which the writer believes to be perfectly correct, will serve to show Skinner's

character in its true light, and exemplify the footing on which he stood with Lord Lake. A Patan soldier came to him one day, during that war, and said, provided that a jagheer and a lakh of rupees were insured to him, he would engage to assassinate Holcar. Skinner, indignant at so cowardly a proposition, was at first disposed to spurn the villain with contempt; but considering that false reports might get abroad, he thought it best to go at once and communicate the proposition to Lord Lake. "Well," said his lordship, "and what do you think? do you believe he will do as he says?" "I think," said Skinner, "he very likely may; but there is little faith to be reposed on the word of a man who proves once a traitor." "What, then, do you think I should do?" inquired his lordship. "Does your lordship wish me to speak the truth freely?" asked Skinner. "Undoubtedly, I do," replied Lord Lake. "Then," said Skinner, "I repeat that it is very likely the man may do what he says: but what will be said in Hindostan of Lord Lake and of the English?—they will say that, not being able to succeed against Holcar by fair means, they had recourse to treachery and assassination. If you will be advised by me, let the man be publicly

told that we give no encouragement to such acts, and let him meet the contempt he deserves: for a much smaller reward I will undertake to find a hundred men who will engage to carry off the head of Holcar from the field of battle. Let the man, however, be saved from the ruin which would inevitably befall him if abandoned after such a disclosure—let him be furnished with what will keep him from want." "You are right," said his lordship; "it is the fit way to deal with him: send for the man, and do as you have yourself proposed."

The man was accordingly sent for, and, in the presence of his own corps, and in public, Skinner told him that the English neither encouraged nor desired treachery—they could well do without it; that as to him, he was a traitor and merited death; but that, on account of the feeling he had manifested to be useful to them, they would give him 100 rupees for life, if he chose to stay in their honest service. "And now, my friends," said he, addressing the corps, "whoever brings me Holcar's head from the field of battle, fairly slain, shall have a splendid reward from me."

In an instant the man's character was gone in the opinion of all who heard the disclosure—he

never could hold his head up afterwards. And, strange to say, he was not long after slain at the battle of ——,* when far in the rear, and before any other man had been touched. Skinner, who with Lord Lake witnessed the circumstance, exclaimed,—"Now, Lord Sahib! see how treachery has met its deserts. That shot surely had its orders,—you see, not a man has yet been hurt, and yet that fellow, though skulking in the rear, has got the blow intended for him."

The game was now up, and Sindea's cause was lost. But had the conduct of Sindea himself been more marked by prudence and ability, and had Perron been honest and sincere, instead of a traitor as he was, the Mahrattas would have given much trouble to the English.

Sindea had abandoned himself to luxury and debauchery, and had destroyed or disgusted all his old experienced generals, while his chieftains were faint hearted, and by no means inclined to fight. Perron, in whom he trusted much, had not only disgusted all the Sirdars in Hindostan, by his pride and overbearing deportment, but had bestowed the command of the troops, the forts, and the districts, upon his own relations and con-

* The name of the battle has been forgotten.

nections, most of whom being men of low extraction and without education, thought only of making money, and looking after their own interests. These, like Perron himself, so far from being sincerely attached to his service, only affected a shew of zeal, in order to blind the natives until they should have an excuse to be off to the Company's provinces, whither they had already remitted the greater part of their wealth.

To name a few of those who thus made a shew of being stanch, while inwardly treacherous, I must begin with Perron himself, who not only was at the head of Sindea's infantry, but commanded all the tributary Rajahs of Hindostan.

The important fort of Alleeghur he had placed under the command of Colonel Pedron. Agra, the key of Hindostan, had been bestowed on his nephew, Colonel George Hessing. Major Deridon, Major Bourquoin, Lieutenant Felose, and others of his relations, had respectively command of brigades in the Dekhan, and had much influence with the troops.

The use they made of this was to derange in every way they could the system of the army, with a view to making their escape the more easily. They endeavoured to shake the confi-

dence of the men in Sindea, and intrigued to have all the English and other European officers dismissed, declaring that they would assuredly go over to the British; and thus secured to themselves the undivided control over the army.

Perron made a great display at Alleeghur. He pitched the royal tent, and proclaimed to the troops, that Sindea had taken up arms in the king of Dehlee's cause, to defend his throne and country from the tyrant English, who wished to deprive him of it. He kept with himself at Alleeghur only 5,000 horse, and ordered all the brigades in Hindostan to march to Dehlee for his majesty's protection, and he invited the king to head these troops, and defend himself against the usurpers. His Majesty accepted this offer, and great preparations were made for the royal reception. Hursook Roy, Perron's chief banker, was sent to Dehlee, to advance such money as his majesty might require. The 2nd and 3rd brigade from Hindostan, and the 4th from Oojeine, were ordered to Dehlee, and all independent powers were summoned by his majesty to that city, to defend the throne of Hindostan. All these measures were taken only a month before Lord Lake appeared before Alleeghur.

But the jealousies existing in the Mahratta councils overthrew every scheme. The generals with Sindea, most of whom were in the interest of Holcar or the English, particularly Ambajee, resolved to leave the brigades to be destroyed. Runjeet Singh of Lahore also determined against making any effort in Sindea's favour. In fact, there was no unity among the powers of Hindostan who had to oppose the English. Holcar, the Nagpore Rajah, and Sindea, all of whom promised to coalesce, never joined or worked in concert, and thus were destroyed singly. The regular brigades, unassisted by any of the Mahratta horse, and shamefully deserted by the French officers who had headed them, were also destroyed by themselves.

Perron, upon the arrival of Lord Lake at Alleeghur, retired to Mendoo, a large village five côs south of Coel, with his 5,000 horse; the rest of the large body he had assembled there all dispersed to their homes, or returned to join their respective chiefs. These 5,000 were placed by Perron under the command of Mr. Fleurea, with orders to go towards Cawnpore, destroying the country as they went. He himself went off to Agra, where his family was, and a

great part of his wealth, in precious stones and jewellery.

Lord Lake, on reaching Alleeghur proposed terms to the garrison, which Colonel Pedron * was inclined to accept, but the garrison putting themselves under command of Bajee Rao, a Bahadourea Rajepoot, confined the colonel, and resolved to defend the fort. This garrison was composed of a regular battalion, 800 strong, commanded by a native, named Meer Shadut Allee,

* Perron had placed the utmost confidence in this officer, and relied on his defending to the last a fortress which, as was the case with Alleeghur, had been fortified with all the skill and pains which science could bestow upon it; and the following letter, which he wrote to Pedron, shows both the importance he attached to the defence, and his confidence that it would be maintained:—"You will have received," he says, "the answer you are to make to the propositions of General Lake. I never could have believed that for a moment you could have thought of a capitulation. Remember, you are a Frenchman; and let no action of yours tarnish the character of your nation. I hope, in a few days, to send back the English general as fast or faster than he came; make yourself easy on this subject. Either the Emperor's army or that of General Lake's shall find a grave before the fort of Alleeghur. Do your duty, and defend the fort while one stone remains upon another. Once more—remember your nation; the eyes of millions are fixed upon you." It is known how Pedron fulfilled the expectations of his commander.

1,000 Bahadourea Rajepoots, 500 Mewattees, and about the same number of recruits, a rissalah of horse, and 200 Golundauz. The Bahadourea Rajepoots with Bajee Rao had charge of the gate and outer fort, and the rest were all in the inner chowbourgee.

On our second visit to Lord Lake, I was offered the command of 2,000 horse; but I refused it, declaring that I never would fight against Sindea. On the 4th of September 1803, Lord Lake assaulted the fort with 500 Europeans of the 76th, and two and a half battalions of Sepoys. They started from camp about two hours before daybreak, and reached the place a little before dawn. A piquet of fifty men, with a 6-pounder, had been stationed, by Bajee Rao, about fifty yards from the fort, at whom this handful of heroes ran like lions. The piquets immediately ran away to the wicket, and got in. The assaulting party attempted to get in along with them, but were shut out. Instead, however, of retreating, these brave fellows stood upon the goonjus for a full hour, under one of the heaviest fires of musketry and great guns I have seen, and only at sunrise did they fall back about a hundred yards; on which the brave Lord Lake,

who was standing near Perron's house, at one of his batteries, called out, "They run!" They were rallied, however, by some of their gallant officers, and in going back they carried with them the Mahratta gun. I was close by Lord Lake, and saw and heard everything that passed. The God of heaven certainly looked down upon these noble fellows, for with two shots they blew open half the gate, and, giving three shouts, they rushed in. The Rajepoots stood their ground like brave soldiers, and from the first to the second gate the fight was desperately maintained on both sides, and the carnage very great.

As soon as he heard the shout, the countenance of Lord Lake changed from anxiety to joy, and he called out, with the greatest delight, "The fort is ours"; and turning to me, asked what I thought of European fighting? I replied that no forts in Hindostan could stand against him. Then spurring his horse, he galloped to the gate. But when he saw his heroes lying thick there, the tears came to his eyes. "It is the fate of good soldiers!" he said; and turning round, he galloped back to the camp, and gave up the fort to plunder. I must here declare that the courage displayed by the 76th surpassed all I had

ever seen, and every idea I had formed of soldiering.

The inner garrison immediately threw down their arms, and began to fly in all quarters. A vast amount of plunder was taken by the troops.*

* The storm of Alleeghur is so remarkable a feat of military daring that we cannot refrain from adding to Skinner's spirited sketch a somewhat more particular account of this most gallant affair:—"Much dependence," says Mr. Grant Duff, "was placed on this fortress. It is very strong, situated on a plain surrounded by swamps, having a good glacis. It was well garrisoned, fully provided with cannon, ammunition, and provisions, and the Mahrattas expected, as they had a right to expect, that it would sustain a long siege. The only passage into the fort was by a narrow causeway across the ditch, for which the French commandant, by gross neglect, had omitted to substitute a drawbridge. General Lake, apprised of this circumstance, determined to hazard an attack by the gateway; and Mr. Lucan, a British subject, one of the officers who had come over from Sindea's service, offered to conduct the storming party. Break of day, on the 4th of September, was the time appointed for the purpose: on the firing of the morning gun, the party, who had been lying for some time within four hundred yards of the gate, immediately advanced; and Colonel Monson pushed forward, at the head of the flank companies of the 76th, in hopes of being able to enter the fort with a party of the enemy that had been stationed outside, behind a breastwork. This had been abandoned, however, and the gate closed, while the entrance was raked by two or three guns, and flanked by the bastions,

As I was returning to the town I saw a European passing through the avenue with a bag of dollars on his shoulders; he was attacked by two native troopers, who sought to deprive him of what he had

which poured upon it a most destructive fire of grape. Scaling-ladders were instantly applied to the walls, and Major MacLeod, of the 76th, with the Grenadiers, attempted to mount; but an impassable row of pikemen above prevented their succeeding. A six-pounder now was brought up to blow open the gate, but it failed of effect; a twelve-pounder was then procured, after some time, but four or five shots were required before the gate would yield; and during this space of twenty minutes the storming party was exposed to a raking fire of musketry and grape from the great guns and wall-pieces. The enemy even came down the scaling-ladders to fight their assailants hand to hand;—here was the principal loss, and here was the most critical point, but nothing could appal the determined spirit of the British troops, who, as soon as the first gate was blown open, advanced, round a circular bastion, loopholed for muskets, to a second gate, which was easily forced. They then had to run along a narrow causeway, constantly exposed to the same raking fire; but succeeded in entering a third gate, at the end of it, along with the fugitives. But at the fourth gate, which led into the body of the place, they were again stopped, under a tremendous fire, until the 12-pounder could again be brought up. This, however, failed, so strong were the fastenings of this last gate; and again was the situation of the party most critical, when, most fortunately, Major MacLeod succeeded in forcing the wicket, through which he was followed by the Grenadiers.

bought so dearly. When he found that blows would not keep the fellows off, he just took and tore the bag, and scattered the cash. The rascals believing their booty thus secure, began to gather them up, upon which he took his gun, shot the one and bayoneted the other; then coolly taking off his jacket, he fixed a knot upon the sleeves, and filling them with the dollars, threw it across his shoulders. He next loaded his gun, and seeing me, called out to me to come near; when I came he offered me fifty dollars if I would escort him to camp. To this I agreed, and went with him to the party that was in charge of Pedron, which was about two hundred yards from us, and here he tendered me the dollars. I, of

The rampart was mounted, opposition gradually ceased, and the British troops—by a happy combination of indefatigable courage and good fortune—found themselves masters of the supposed-impregnable fortress of Alleeghur, after a single morning's bloody work: it was indeed bloody,—223 officers and men were killed and wounded of the British; six officers of the 76th alone being among the first; under the circumstances, it is wonderful that the loss was not still more severe. The loss of the Mahrattas was far more severe, 2,000 being killed, besides those drowned or smothered in the ditch, in their endeavours to escape: amongst the slain was the brave Bajee Rao, the Rajepoot commander of the place.

course, refused to take them; on which he thanked me, and I returned to the town. I am sorry to add, that the gate by which these gallant fellows entered was pointed out to them by Lieutenant Lucan, an Irishman, and an officer in the Mahratta service, who received for the job 24,000 rupees, and a commission in H. M.'s 76th.

On the 25th, intelligence reached Lord Lake that Fleurea had surprised Colonel Cunningham, at Shekoabad, and compelled him to sign a capitulation, by which he bound himself and party, consisting of five companies, not to carry arms against Sindea during the war; in consideration of which they were permitted to retire with their arms to Futtighur or Cawnpore. It appeared that these five companies had defended themselves for twenty-four hours against 5,000 horse, and did not give in until their ammunition was expended. All the officers were wounded, and a great number of the men killed; while Fleurea, on his side, lost seven of his best rissaldars, and about 500 of his men.

As soon as Lord Lake was informed of the direction which Fleurea had taken, he detached some regiments of cavalry in pursuit. But information of the fall of Alleeghur having that very

day reached Fleurea, and his men refusing to believe it had been taken by assault, but maintaining that it was treacherously surrendered by Perron, they immediately took the way to Agra, where they expected to find that general. He had, however, removed with his family and effects to Muttra, taking with him his body-guard of 800 horsemen, mounted from his own stable, and 500 Mewattees; and here Fleurea's horse joined him.

In the mean time, Mons. Bourquoin got up an intrigue at Dehlee, which occasioned no small confusion. Asserting that Perron had turned traitor, and had gone over to the English, he invited the troops at Dehlee to make him their commander, and that he would lead them on to glory. Having succeeded in persuading them to agree to this proposal, he next stirred up a mutiny in the 2nd brigade, and got them to place Mons. Zellon, their commander, along with all their officers, in arrest, under fixed bayonets. In vain did M. Zellon, who was an honest man, assure them that Bourquoin's assertions were false, that Perron had not gone over to the English, and that Bourquoin was only misleading them; all was fruitless, they would not listen to him. Bour-

quoin then called upon the king, and procured from him a khilut of investiture as commander-in-chief of Perron's infantry. His next step was to demand from Mr. Drugeon, the governor of Dehlee, all the public treasure. This Drugeon refused, and his garrison of 5,000 men proving stanch, he turned Bourquoin out of the fort, and told the king that he would obey no one until he should hear from Perron.

Bourquoin immediately laid siege to the fort with his brigade, and placed eight battering guns at one of the bastions near the Rajghaut; seized Hirsook Roy, and took from him some lakhs of rupees. The siege lasted two days, during which he levelled the bastion to the ground; and then the king begged of him to suspend operations, and that he would contrive to make Drugeon obey his orders.

Not content with this, Bourquoin wrote to the sowars of the cavalry at Muttra, informing them that Perron was a traitor, and enjoining them to seize him. Perron suspected that this was going on, and in order to save himself he had recourse to a stratagem. Mustering the cavalry, he complained to them of Bourquoin's conduct, assured them of the falsehood of all his assertions,

and declared he would immediately go and punish him for his treachery. He assured them that if they would follow him faithfully, he would drive this Lord Lake out of the Doab; and distributing three lakhs of rupees amongst the rissaldars for their sowars, declared he would that evening cross the Jumna with his body-guard; while they, taking money for their expenses from their rissaldars, should follow in the morning.

The rissaldars finding so much money in their hands, began to quarrel about the division of it, while Perron crossed in the evening with his body-guard. When it became dark, he gave the Mewattees five thousand rupees, desiring them to keep all the boats in their own hands during the night, and in the morning give them to the Sowars, while he should march on about five côs. But he lost no time in sending an express to Lord Lake, to say he had resigned Sindea's service, and requesting that he would receive and assign him quarters; while, instead of five, he made a march of twenty côs during the night, and reached Sasnee in the morning.

No sooner did the Sowars discover that Perron had fled, than their faith in Bourquoin returned, and, believing him a true man, they all marched

for Dehlee to join him. In the mean time, Lord Lake, having sent an officer, Captain Brownigg, to escort Perron to Lucknow, and leaving a battalion to garrison the fort of Alleeghur, marched on the 7th September towards Dehlee. On hearing this, Bourquoin endeavoured to persuade the troops to march with him to Hurriana. This opened their eyes, and finding that he was as bad as Perron, they put him in confinement, and one of the native commandants, named Surwur Khan, taking the command, twelve battalions from both the brigades crossed the Jumna, with 100 pieces of cannon and all the horse, amounting to 5,000 or 6,000 men.

This force came up with Lord Lake on the 9th of September at Suddur ka Serai, and so badly off for information was the British troops, that the sepoys were cooking their dinner on the banks of the Hindun river, when they perceived a large body of Bourquoin's cavalry coming up. These were beaten on the 10th; but the plan and circumstances of the battle of Dehlee* are so well

* In this memorable battle 4,500 British troops had to encounter 19,000 of the enemy, of whom only 6,000 were cavalry, supported by a park of sixty-eight cannon, all admirably served, and all in an excellent position. The British troops were wearied with a long march, and roused up

known, that I need not describe it. About 2,000 men made good their retreat to Tupple, and crossed the Jumna, carrying off four pieces of cannon, the rest were all cut up by the British cavalry. Lord Lake arrived at Dehlee with the army, and was very kindly received by the king, who had long suffered from the Mahratta reign. Bourquoin and all the Frenchmen gave themselves up, and the remains of the brigade made good their retreat to Agra, where they were joined by the 4th brigade, the commander of which, Chevalier Dudernaig, with all the French officers, escaped and joined Colonel Vandeleur at Muttra.

Eight rissalahs of Perron's horse came over to Lord Lake at Dehlee, and were taken into the

to fight while cooking their untasted food. It was one steady but desperate charge of the bayonet against the cannon—for the men, though falling in scores, never took their musket from their shoulders till within 100 paces of the enemy, when orders were given for the charge. The British loss was 400 killed and wounded; that of the enemy not less than 3,000, besides those drowned in the Jumna. Both Lord Lake and his son had horses shot under them; and the same order pervaded all ranks and classes of the troops. Dehlee, of course, was abandoned by the enemy, and Bourquoin and many of his officers surrendered themselves immediately after the action.

British service, and being asked to choose one of their own officers as their commander, they named me. Lord Lake, on my second visit, had offered me the command of 2,000 horse, but I declined it, declaring that I would never carry arms against Sindea. At Coel, where I was left during Lord Lake's march to Dehlee, proclamation was made to all the British and country-born officers, late of Sindea's, informing us that we should meet with punishment, if we were found again in arms against the British; but that whoever chose to accept and serve, should receive the same pay he had from Perron; and now, my old comrades having asked for me, I received a letter from Lord Lake appointing me to the command, with a promise that I should not be employed against Sindea, but that my duty should be to keep the road from Alleeghur to Dehlee clear of all marauders. I accordingly joined my corps at Secundra, having arranged that Lieutenant Scott should be appointed my second in command.

When Lord Lake arrived at Secundra, my brother Robert was sent from the Begum Sumroo to make terms for her. His lordship immediately sent him back with a treaty, and directions to stand fast, and not to move from Sirdhana, in

which case she should be treated favourably by the British government.

The name of this lady and of her husband, the notorious Sumroo, have been several times mentioned, and as they were personages of some celebrity, and who played no inconsiderable part in the changing scenes of those days in India, it may be proper to explain rather more at large who they were and what they did.

CHAPTER X.

Sumroo, or Sombre, his origin and military career—Enters Meer Cossim's service—Puts to death the English at Patna—Deserts to Shujah-u-Dowlut—His methods of securing arrears of pay—His character—The Begum Sumroo—Her origin and history—Gallantly supports the Moghul Emperor—Submits to Lord Lake—His characteristic reception of her—Her character and appearance—Employment of Skinner's corps by Lord Lake—Against Madhoo Rao Falkea—He defeats that chief—Forces him to surrender Mallaghur—Agra taken by Lord Lake—Murder of British officers by Holcar—Battle of Lasswarrie—War with Holcar—Skinner sent with his corps against the Sikhs—They are surprised, defeated, and forced into terms of submission to the British authority—Skinner receives the thanks of Lord Lake.

WALTER REINEHARD was a native of the Electorate of Treves,* who came out to India as a car-

* The greater part of these details are to be found in Scott's History of the Dekhan and of Bengal; the Seir Mootaquereen; and Frânklin's Shah Allum and History of George Thomas. See also Major Polier's Letter in the Asiatic Annual Register for 1800.

penter in the French sea service; but having served for some time in the south of India, he came to Bengal, where he enlisted in one of the companies of Europeans employed at Calcutta. Deserting from thence after a few days, he repaired to Chandernagore, and became a sergeant once more in the French service. Here, however, he did not continue long; and flying to the upper provinces, he became a private trooper in the cavalry of Sufder Jung, the father of Shujah-u-Dowlut, the Nawab Vizier of Oude. But this service seems not to have suited him either; for he soon left it, and he is next heard of in 1760 as in that of the rebel Foujedar of Purnea, Khadum Hoosseen Khan; but this officer having been expelled from Bengal, Sumroo left him, and took service with Gregory, an Armenian, at that time high in favour with Meer Cossim, the Nawab of Bengal, and distinguished by the name of Goorgeen Khan. From this person, Sumroo received command of a battalion of sepoys, and to this was soon after added another conferred by the Nawab himself.

It was at this time, when Meer Cossim, furious and half disordered in his mind, at the bad success of his arms against the English, on hearing of the

taking by them of Monghir, where he had deposited much of his stores and treasure, ordered Sumroo to put to death all the English prisoners that had been taken some time previous at Patna, an order which the native historians state his having obeyed with all alacrity.

When Meer Cossim's affairs appeared desperate, Sumroo, we learn, came with his troops, and surrounding the tents of Meer Cossim, clamorously demanded their pay. This the Nawab told him he had not to give, that he must now discharge him, but that he must deliver over the arms and cannon to the officer of his arsenal. Sumroo insolently replied, that they now belonged to those who possessed them, and deserted from him, with all his corps, to the service of Shujah-u-Dowlut, who had gained him by bribery. But upon the defeat of that prince at Buxar, where his force was utterly broken, Sumroo was entrusted with the care of the Begum's, and he remained in the Nawab Vizier's service until he made peace with the English. One of the conditions of this peace, which, however, never was fulfilled, was that Meer Cossim and Sumroo should both be given up. But, however unprincipled or easy of conscience the Vizier might be,

the giving up a prince who had taken refuge with him, and whose cause he had pledged himself to support, was too flagrant a breach of faith and hospitality, even in those times, to be committed without injury to character; and the Vizier, in reply to the demand, declined the actual treachery, but offered to let the unhappy Meer Cossim, plundered as he had been,* escape, when they might follow and seize him, if they pleased. As for Sumroo, he was, he remarked, at the head of an armed force, and it might not be easy to seize him; but that, if they pleased, he would invite him to an entertainment, and have him put to death, in the presence of any Englishman they might choose to send as a witness of the act, an offer which did not at all suit with English ideas.

In regard to Meer Cossim, the wretched man escaped, with some of his family and a few friends, into the Rohilla country, whither he had contrived to send some funds previous to being plundered; he died some time afterwards at an obscure village

* It is asserted that much of this plunder remained in Sumroo's hands, and was the means by which he was enabled to hold his troops together, and the foundation of his future success.

near Dehlee, and after many intrigues; "unlamented," says the native historian, "even by his own family." Sumroo, not much more disposed to trust the Vizier, secured his arrears of pay, by surrounding the Begums and Zenana of that prince in Rohilcunda, and forcing at last his dues from them, after which he retired to Agra with his corps, and entered the service of Jowahir Rajah, son of Sooruj Mall, the Jhat prince of Bhurtpore,* where he remained but a short time, and then took service with the Rajah of Jeypore. But on a remonstrance from the English authorities, now formidable in all the northern provinces, he was dismissed by that prince; and after another short service with the Jhats, he left them finally, and came to Dehlee. There he was first entertained by the minister Abdulahud Khan, but discharged after four months, from fear of offending the English. He was, however, immediately retained by Nujjuff Khan Zulficar-u-Dowlut, at that time supreme at Dehlee, who, while reducing the Jhats to obedience, had probably become aware of Sumroo's value. It was he who assigned to the fortunate adventurer, the purgunnah of

* Deeg, and many other strong places, belonged to the Jhat Rajah.

Serdhanah,* in Jeydad, for the maintenance of his corps, and in the service of this nobleman Sumroo remained until he died, in the year 1778.

Sumroo appears to have been a man whose evil propensities far outweighed the good; he was stern and bloody-minded, in no degree remarkable for fidelity or devotion to his employers, and though we cannot imagine him void of those qualities which attach the soldiery to their officer, we can see little in his career to indicate anything more than the hard, unscrupulous, and reckless, though bold, military adventurer. His character and disposition seem typified by the sobriquet, which he received from his European companions, of *Sombre*, transformed by the natives into Sumroo.†

This man, at some period of his life not exactly known, became attached to the female afterwards known as Begum‡ Sumroo. There are various

* Valued at six lakhs of rupees a year, but by the Begum's good management increased to ten.

† He is said to have despised show, dressing in the plain Moghul garb, and never disowning his low origin: one of his most marked traits is a cautious prudence, which at length amounted to a suspicious jealousy, that rendered his life entirely a burthen.

‡ Begum, a princess, or wife of a beg or noble, from her holding the little principality of Serdhanah.

origins attributed to her. Franklin says she was the daughter of a decayed Moghul noble. The natives, with more probability of correctness, say she was a Cashmerian dancing girl whose personal charms first attracted him, and whose talents and sound judgment became so valuable to him in the sequel, as to gain a great ascendancy over him. Whether he married her or not is uncertain, but she was regarded as his wife, and succeeded at his death to his corps and his jaedad,—the former having been increased by the command of a body of Moghul horse, assigned to him by Nujjuff Khan. By means of her uncommon ability and discretion, united to a masculine firmness and intrepidity, and aided by this force, the regular portion of which, according to Franklin, amounted to five battalions of sepoys, about 200 Europeans, officers and artillerists, and forty pieces of cannon, she managed to preserve her country nearly unmolested, and her authority generally unimpaired, during a period of surrounding storm and tempest, which shook several great powers from their thrones. The Moghul court supported her while it could; and Sindea had so high an opinion of her capacity, that he not only added to her possessions some lands south-west of the Jumna, but,

while engaged in war with Purtaub Sing of Jeypore, he intrusted the western frontier to her protection, by stationing her force at Paneeput.*

To the court of Dehlee she always adhered with fidelity, and showed her attachment strongly in the hour of need during Gholaum Kawdir's atrocious attack upon his sovereign in his own palace at Dehlee. Rejecting contemptuously that powerful miscreant's offer of marriage and equality of power, the Begum repaired to the palace with all her force, resolved to defend her sovereign so far as she might be able. In answer to a summons to quit the city on pain of immediate hostilities, she erected a battery in aid of the fort, and replied from it to the heavy cannonade of Gholaum Kawdir; and had the Moghul troops seconded hers with equal spirit, the Rohilla would

* It is a remarkable thing, and much to the credit of the Begum's troops, that some four or five of her battalions were the only part of Sindea's army that went off unbroken from the field of Assaye: they were charged by our cavalry towards the close of the day, but without effect; Colonel Maxwell, who commanded, being killed in the charge by a grape-shot. The people in the Dekhan, who knew the Begum by reputation, believed her to be a witch, who destroyed her enemies by throwing her *chadir* at them; the word *chadir* meaning "chain-shot" as well as a "woman's veil."

have been forced to retire. But treachery prevailed, and her efforts were rendered vain.

Soon after this, the Shah, by the advice of his ministers, made a progress through the neighbouring districts, in order to reduce certain rebels to order, and commenced operations against Nujjuff Koolee Khan, a proud refractory noble, who held the strong fort of Goculghur. Certain officers of the royal army, having neglected their duty and their watch, were surprised by the enemy in a sortie, which threw the whole of the royal troops into a dangerous state of confusion. The Begum, who was encamped near, came again to his assistance; and, ordering up three battalions of her sepoys, with a gun, under command of a European,* and accompanying them herself in her palankeen, she commenced a fire of grape and musketry — which being unexpected, was the more alarming—the king's troops rallied, and Nujjuff Koolee Khan was forced to retire, and then to humble himself to his sovereign. All agreed that the royal arms were saved from disgrace by the Begum's presence of mind; and the Shah himself, in full durbar, honoured her with a

* It was George Thomas, who used to tell the story himself.

magnificent khilut, and called her "his most beloved daughter," in addition to her various other titles.

Her power, however, no more than her good will, was able to save her sovereign from the misery and distress which were poured on his devoted head by the Rohilla chief and his traitor nobles, —and we hear little more of her till about the year 1795, when those inclinations which ought to have ceased their sway in the heart of a well advanced and sound-headed woman, as she certainly was on most occasions, betrayed her into a measure which had nearly proved fatal to her. Amongst the principal European officers of her army, we have seen that George Thomas at one time held a conspicuous place, and that he had been superseded in his influence and command by a rival. This rival appears to have been an officer named Levasso, or Le Vaissaux,—said by Mr. Franklin to have been a German* adventurer, for whom she is understood to have conceived an attachment—and whom, contrary to the advice of her friends, and that of the king himself, who like them predicted the downfall of her authority—and contrary, above all, to her

* He must have been French.

usual prudence, she married. This man, though not deficient in abilities, was stern and haughty, and soon disgusted both officers and soldiers—the former more particularly, from procuring the disgrace of one Legois, an officer, so called from being a native of Liege, and to whom the soldiery had been long attached. The matter terminated in a mutiny, or rather conspiracy, which they formed to depose both the Begum and her husband, and to place in command of the troops, and on the "musnud" of Serdhanah, a son of Sumroo, though not by the Begum, Zaffer Yab Khan, who at the time resided at Dehlee. It was not at once that the Zaffer Yab Khan agreed to accept the dangerous honour; for he had a very serious dread of the ability and intrigues of his mother-in-law. But at last he did consent; and either so unexpected or so sweeping appears to have been the revolt, that we find the Begum and her husband at once preparing for flight, and proceeding towards the Ganges, in order to seek refuge in Oude. They were overtaken, however, by a party of cavalry sent by Zaffer Yab Khan especially to intercept them,—and they were surrounded, at the village of Kerwah, in the Begum's jagheer, only four miles from Serdhanah.

A free pardon was proclaimed by the usurper to her few attendants, provided they would lay down their arms, and give up the Begum and her husband—and great confusion ensued. The infantry surrounded her palankeen, demanding her to surrender; while the cavalry did the same to her husband. From whatever motive, the Begum drew her poniard, and, striking it across her breast, the blood gushed out, though the wound was a mere scratch. On hearing the tumult and the cries for assistance, her husband called out to know what it meant. They told him the Begum had killed herself,—twice again he repeated the question, and, receiving twice the same reply, he very deliberately drew a pistol, put it to his mouth, and shot himself, and immediately fell from his horse. "The villains," says Mr. Thomas, who tells the story, "who the preceding day had styled themselves his slaves, now committed every act of insult and indignity on his corpse.

The motive of the Begum in this strange proceeding is not very clear. It is said by some that, before her husband and she left Serdhanah, they made an agreement, in case of accident, that neither should survive the other: and Levasso's suicide may be held to give this some colour. It

is not impossible, if any such compact had been entered into, that the Begum, a selfish and artful woman, seeing in what extremities her imprudent marriage had involved her, might choose this way to relieve herself of her self-imposed fetters. However this may be, she was conducted back to Serdhanah as a prisoner, and Zaffer Yab Khan assumed the government of her jagheer.

Like many other persons, however, the Begum in her adversity recollected those who had been her true friends in prosperity, and among the first to whom she applied was George Thomas. To him she wrote in piteous terms, declaring her apprehensions even from poison or the dagger,—affirming that her only dependence was on him, and offering any terms, either to him or to the Mahrattas, if, through his intervention, they would come and reinstate her in her jagheer.

Thomas, as we have already seen, like a true cavalier, was not slow to listen to his former mistress's woes. He generously laid aside ancient animosities, and bribed Bappoo Sindea to move upon Serdhanah, and setting on foot a negociation to corrupt Zaffer Yab Khan's men—a species of diplomatic warfare never omitted in Indian disputes—he published that no mercy would be

extended to those who continued to resist the Begum's authority. The Begum was reinstated accordingly, and Zaffer Yab confined. But such is the fickleness of scoundrels like these, that before Thomas could reach the place, there was a counter-revolution. Zaffer Yab was set at large; and, seeing Mr. Thomas appear but slightly accompanied, he ordered an attack upon him and his fifty sowars. Fortunately, there were 400 more just behind: this altered the case—the mutineers submitted—the Begum was fully reinstated—oaths of allegiance administered—and the unfortunate usurper, plundered and a prisoner, was conducted to Dehlee and there confined.

From this time we hear little of the Begum, save that she appears, as formerly stated, to have held her contingent ready at the Mahratta call, for guarding the frontier. And in 1799, especially, she accompanied their army to the Sikh country, returning from Paneeput to Serdhanah. The brilliant successes of the British arms, however, and the events of the Mahratta war, so convincingly proving the superiority of the English over the native power, was not to be overlooked by so shrewd an observer as the Begum. The overture made by that lady to Lord Lake, men-

tioned above, took place almost immediately after the battle of Dehlee, and it was not long before she came to pay her respects in person; upon which occasion an incident occurred of a curious and characteristic description. She arrived at head-quarters, it appears, just after dinner, and being carried in her palankeen at once to the reception tent, his lordship came out to meet and receive her. As the adhesion of every petty chieftain was, in those days, of consequence, Lord Lake was not a little pleased at the early demonstration of the Begum's loyalty; and being a little elevated by the wine which had just been drunk, he forgot the novel circumstance of its being a native female he was about to receive, instead of some well-bearded chief, so he gallantly advanced, and, to the utter dismay of her attendants, took her in his arms and kissed her. The mistake might have been awkward, but the lady's presence of mind put all right. Receiving courteously the proffered attention, she turned calmly round to her astonished attendants—"It is," said she, "the salute of a *padre* (or *priest*) to his daughter." The Begum professes Christianity, and thus the explanation was perfectly in character, though more experienced spectators

might have smiled at the appearance of the jolly red-coated clergyman, exhibited in the person of his lordship.

Since that time the Begum has lived much in habits of social courtesy and friendly intercourse with the English, receiving them at very handsome entertainments, and very frequently appearing at the residency table, where she freely participated in all the good things it afforded. Of her character and dispositions somewhat may be judged from what has been said above. Her best qualities were those of the head—her sound judgment, her shrewdness of observation, her prudence, and occasional fidelity to her trust—chiefly as exemplified in her conduct to the unfortunate Shah Allum. For those of the heart, we fear much cannot be said. She was cruel, unforgiving, relentless, deceitful, liberal only where self-interest required it, and courteous too often merely to hide enmity. One anecdote—it is given by Bishop Heber, and we believe is in the main correct—will serve to show something of her ruthless and implacable nature. A slave-girl had offended her—an affair, we believe, of jealousy. The poor creature was brought before her—a hole dug in the earth under the floor of the room, in which

she was buried alive — and, as if it had been a trifling occurrence, her mistress smoked her hookah unconcernedly on this living grave.

In her youth, the Begum must have been handsome — her features and person small and delicate, like most of the women of India; even when the writer knew her, in 1815-16, she had the remains of good looks, and a beautiful hand and arm, which she used to be rather proud of as she smoked her hookah. When the bishop saw her, in 1825, she was "a very little queer-looking old woman, with brilliant, wicked-looking eyes." She never had any children, but adopted several slave-girls as daughters, whom she bestowed as such upon her favourite officers. She died very wealthy, and her jagheer has reverted to the Company.

After settling matters at Dehlee, Lord Lake marched on the 24th of September with the army for Agra. He appointed Colonel Ochterlony Resident at Dehlee, with two battalions of the line as garrison; and ordering two Nujeeb battalions to be raised for its further protection, the command of which was given to two Mahratta officers, Lieutenant Birch receiving the one, and Lieutenant Woodwill the other.

I had been engaged for about a month in settling the country under my charge, which was much infested by petty robbers, when all of a sudden, Madhoo Rao Falkea, a Mahratta chief, who possessed Malaghur in jagheer, summoned me to quit the country. My reply was, that he must make his application to the British Resident at Dehlee, whose orders alone I could attend to. On the other side, Bappoo Sindea had approached Soonput, only twenty côs north of Dehlee, with 5,000 men, and five or six guns. To oppose this inroad, Birch was ordered off with both the Nujeeb battalions, and I was ordered to Dehlee. The same day I began to cross at Putpurgunge, news arrived that Bappoo had beaten Birch, and cut up both battalions. In the evening he arrived in Dehlee, safe himself, but accompanied by Lieutenant Woodwill wounded, and the few men who had escaped. Bappoo, after this exploit, went off to Kannund, his capital, fifty côs west of Dehlee. I was ordered back by Ochterlony, and on reaching Secundra, received information that Madhoo Rao was prepared to attack me, with a battalion consisting of 800 men, 500 horse, and two guns. Hearing this, I wrote to the Resident, and aware that he could not assist me with troops, requested

him to send me a couple of field-pieces, with which I would try a battle. His answer was that one of my countrymen had already lost four of the Company's guns, and he would not trust me with another; but that I was by no means to retreat.

Much hurt by this ill-natured remark, I resolved not to retreat, but rather to die; and on being again summoned by Madhoo, replied that I should not stir. His troops were led by a chief of his own, and Malaghur being only eight côs from Secundra, he came up to me about four in the morning. On becoming aware of his march, I caused my men, about 1,200 in number, to mount, and remained till sunrise drawn up in front of my camp.

Madhoo's general remained about a côs from me, and finding he would approach no further, I moved on towards him. When within reach, he fired a few rounds, on which I formed my men into two *gholes*,* and sending Lieutenant Scott with one on his left flank, took to the right myself, the enemy being drawn up in a line with his guns in the centre, and the cavalry in his rear. Both gholes attempted to turn his flanks,

* Dense bodies.

but the men behaved ill, and we were repulsed. I collected them and attempted to charge, but they deserted me. I passed between the guns with about fourteen men, and just as I did so, my horse was shot under me, by a matchlock ball, and one of the troopers carried me off behind him.

I then rejoined my party, harangued them and got them together again, mounted another charger, and brought my men a second time to the charge. Madhoo's infantry gave us a volley and then turned; we dashed in and cut them to pieces. The cavalry fled to Malaghur; we took their guns and gained a complete victory. Lieutenant Scott received eleven sabre cuts, and was not expected to recover, and we had 200 men killed and wounded. The battle was gained by great exertion, for my men, just entered the service, did not fight with zeal. I wrote an account of the whole affair to the Resident at Dehlee, begging him to send assistance for Lieutenant Scott, which request he immediately complied with, laying a dâk for him to that city. He also wrote me a public letter of thanks, and I received a very handsome one from Lord Lake, a few days afterwards, assuring me of his sense of my exer-

tions.* The Resident then ordered me to Dehlee, and directed me to try and get Madhoo Rao out of the fort of Malaghur, and away from the country, even at the expense of a lakh of rupees if required.

On my return to camp accordingly, I marched to Malaghur with my horse, and encamped at a place called Bagwallah, three côs to the north of the fort. There were in garrison with Madhoo,

* The following is the letter alluded to in the text:—

To CAPTAIN SKINNER,

SIR,—The Commander-in-Chief has derived great satisfaction from the perusal of your letter of the 9th inst., communicating the defeat of Madhoo Row by the troops under your command.

His Excellency desires me to express his cordial thanks to you and Lieutenant Scott for your gallant conduct, and trusts the wounds which Lieutenant Scott has received will neither prove dangerous nor long deprive the service of the benefit of his exertions.

His Excellency desires you will signify to the native officers and men his entire approbation of their behaviour, and to assure them the bravery which they have shown on this occasion merits His Excellency's warmest praises, in testimony of which he has ordered the enclosed Persian letter to be addressed to them.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient servant,

(Signed) J. GERRARD,
Adjutant-General.

Head-Quarters, Camp at Agra,
23rd Oct. 1803.

about 2,000 infantry, 300 sowars, and several guns.

I offered him terms, but he refused them with contempt, on which I commenced harassing him with my horse, cutting off all his supplies, and attacking his cavalry whenever I could meet them out of reach of cannon-shot. This was continued for fifteen days without effect, when I found out that all the forage in the fort consisted of two stacks of grass, which would last the horses about three months. These I resolved to destroy, if possible, and for this purpose agreed with a Goojur spy, who volunteered the service for 300 rupees. This man having some brethren in the fort, pretended to desert from me, and fled into the place, where he was well received. He returned in a week, after assuring me that he had done the business; upon inquiring how he had managed it, he told me he had put a slow match to each stack, an assertion which I was slow to believe at first, but in the course of twenty-four hours we saw them both on fire, on which I gave him the money agreed upon.

Three days after this the horse made offers to come over, but I refused to receive them alone. Several attempted to escape, but they were pur-

sued and put to death by my horse. At length Madhoo Rao sent a vakeel to make terms with me, and the following were proposed and accepted. The fort was to be given up, but all his private property was to be secured to him, except the guns and provisions, which were to be left, and the soldiers were permitted to march out with their arms. I told him also, that I should take him to the Resident at Dehlee, who I was sure would take him into the service.

The fort and the purgunnah, consisting of twenty-eight villages, were then given up and added to the Company's territory, and I marched Madhoo Rao with all his troops to Dehlee, where he was received very kindly by the Resident, and afterwards handsomely pensioned. His son, Ram Rao, was taken, with 600 sowars, into the British service. For my part, I received the thanks of the Resident and Lord Lake for this service, which, though it did not involve much hard fighting, was yet a duty of great fatigue and hard work. Of my force, there were never less than 300 or 400 men mounted day and night, and amongst them I constantly required to be. By this close blockade, the enemy was forced to come in within the month, and the cash I was autho-

rized to give for the surrender of the place was thus saved to the government.

Returning to camp, I resumed the measures which had been resorted to for settling the country, so that, in the course of a month, peace and tranquillity was restored from Alleeghur to the gates of Dehlee. Several mud forts were taken, and many parties of desperate marauders were destroyed; so that collections of revenue began to come in from the country. The Resident continued his kindness to me, rewarding me liberally for services well performed, and sending favourable reports of my conduct to head-quarters.

On the 4th of October, Lord Lake arrived at Agra. At Muttra he was joined by Colonel Vandeleur and Colonel Clarke, with a large detachment of troops. On the 10th October, he attacked the battalions of Perron's 3rd brigade, who were posted under the fort, and who defended the town bravely against the British. After the town had been carried, Lord Lake attacked the fort, towards the Taje. Hessing, who commanded the fort, was too rich a man to defend it well; he soon found means to dissatisfy the garrison, and the troops being offered service by the British, Colonel Hessing's five battalions,

under command of Major Brownrigg, first came over; and then, on the 17th October, the Colonel got the garrison to give up the place. For himself he made good terms, carrying off four or five lakhs of rupees, besides what he had in the Company's funds; and twenty-four lakhs of Sindea's cash were taken by the English commander.

This conduct of the Europeans in the Mahratta service totally ruined their own character, and led to the destruction of their comrades who had remained stanch to their master's cause. These were all seized and put to death, or tortured in prison until they died. Among the former was Colonel Vickers,* who, with seven of his officers, was beheaded in one day, by Holcar. Captain Mackenzie and Lieut. Langeman, with several others of Perron's brigades, were confined and

* This officer (a young half-caste) is the same who has already been noticed (p. 136) as having, by his great gallantry and steadiness, contributed much to Holcar's victory over the Peishwah's army at Poonah, on the 25th of October 1802, and whose conduct was at that time the theme of admiration amongst all military men. Vickers was one of three English officers in Holcar's service, who, upon signifying that they could not carry arms against the English, and must leave his service, were seized and put to death, under circumstances of great barbarity; this will be further adverted to hereafter.

tortured at Gwalior; others perished in the service of different petty rajahs; while all those traitors, who were the cause of their deaths, were well treated by Lord Lake, and suffered to go whither they chose.

Surwar Khan, with fourteen battalions and 100 pieces of cannon, still kept in a body; but he could get no Mahratta chiefs to join him. Several tempting offers were make by Lord Lake, both to himself and his troops, but he would not listen to them, but marched from Futtehpore Seekree to Bhurtpore to seek protection from the Rajah. This, however, was refused, so he prevailed upon a Mahratta pundit to join him with 4,000 or 5,000 horse, and they commenced their march towards the Mewat hills. Lord Lake, after settling matters at Agra, marched in pursuit of these faithful but unfortunate men, who, deprived of their officers, were commanded only by natives, assisted by a few European and country-born gunners among the artillery.

They were overtaken at the pass of Lasswarrie, on the morning of the 1st November, by Lord Lake, with his cavalry, who attacked the rear-guard of four battalions, 1,000 horse, and twenty guns. The contest was severe. A regiment or

two of the British cavalry made its way through some of the Mahratta battalions; but though they put them into confusion, they could not destroy them, and British and Mahrattas got into a mess together. The cavalry charged repeatedly up to the very bayonets, but could not penetrate them, until the main body, which had marched in the morning, hearing the cannonade, returned and joined their rear-guard; on which the British cavalry retired, with a severe loss, particularly in officers and Europeans.

Surwar Khan now took up a position, determined to fight it out. He drew up the remains of the 2nd and 3rd brigade upon the right; and placed the 4th brigade, which, not having yet suffered, was complete, upon the left. The cavalry was stationed in the rear, a small tank of water was in front, and the flanks were each supported by villages, having in front long chopper grass. Had he cut the brind, or dam, of the water-tank, he might have saved himself a few days longer; but fate had decreed otherwise. The British infantry came up about two o'clock, and after refreshing themselves a little, their brave commander led them to the attack. The

contest was fierce and firmly disputed, as all who were there know full well. Again did the heroes of the 76th distinguish themselves, doing credit to their nation; and so also did the 12th sepoy infantry. Lord Lake's son was wonnded, and his lordship had two horses killed under him. On the British side the loss was great, but the remains of Perron's infantry was this day totally destroyed.

As Lord Lake was returning from the battle, some of the Europeans cheered him. He took off his hat and thanked them, but told them to despise death as these brave fellows had done, pointing to the Mahrattas, who were lying thick around their guns. All of these guns were captured, with several thousand prisoners, besides killed and wounded, the number of which on the Mahratta side was very great—but it never was properly ascertained, as I believe the field was never cleared, and the poor fellows were left to the wild beasts.

Lord Lake, after sending the captured guns to Agra, marched towards Jeypore, from whence some correspondence took place with Holcar; and, in consequence of some threatening letters from that chief, Colonel Monson, with a large

detachment, including Bappoo Sindea and the Baraitch horse, and 2,000 irregular horse under Lucan, was ordered to march towards his capital; while Colonel Murray, of the Bombay establishment, was directed to march from Guzzrat to co-operate with Monson. The army then, after taking Rampoorah, marched to Agra, and broke up on the 7th June, Lord Lake and the Europeans moving on to Cawnpore.

At this period, intelligence being received that a considerable body of Sikhs had assembled on the bank of the Jumna, opposite to Saharunpore, where Colonel Burn then was, I was directed to join him with all expedition. While on my way, I received orders to proceed and assist Captain Birch, formerly of the Mahratta service, but now commanding a battalion of Nujeebs, who had been pushed on to the banks of the Jumna, with instructions to prevent the Sikhs from crossing, and had taken up a position at one of the fordable ghauts. On my arrival, I perceived a numerous body of Sikhs upon the opposite side; and, after reconnoitring their position, and consulting with Captain Birch, I suggested that, if he would occupy their attention from his position, I would cross the river with my horse at some other

fordable ghaut in the vicinity, and take them by surprise.

This was effected about three in the morning, about five côs below; and, having come up before daybreak, I succeeded in completely surprising them. The result was, that the party, consisting of about 5,000 horse, was totally dispersed, with the loss of 400 men and two surdars killed, and about 100 horses taken. On our side we had about 100 men and horses killed and wounded —my own horse having been shot under me.

In a month afterwards, I prevailed on the Sikh chieftains to accompany me to Colonel Burn, with whom they entered into terms. The chieftains who came in on this occasion, were as follows:—Shere Sing, of Boorea; Doolcha Sing, an owner of several villages; Goordut Sing, of Ludwah; and several other commanders of bodies of 500 men each. For this service I received public thanks from the Resident of Dehlee; and from his excellency, Lord Lake,* as also from

* Sir,—I have had the honour to lay your letter of the 27th and 28th ult. before the Commander-in-Chief. His Excellency has perused with peculiar satisfaction your report of the successful operations of the detachment under the command of Captain Skinner. The Commander-in-Chief has on former occasions remarked the zeal and

Colonel Burn, with whom I continued six months, to his perfect satisfaction.

spirit evinced by Captain Skinner, and, in the present instance, the judgment, decision, and promptitude which he has displayed calls for his fullest approbation. His Excellency desires you will signify to Captain Skinner his cordial thanks for the ability, skill, and courage he has shown; and to Lieutenant Woodville, and officers and men who were employed on this occasion, his thanks and approbation of their steady and gallant behaviour.—I have the honour to be, sir, your most obedient servant,

(Signed) J. Gerrard,
Adjutant-General.

Head-Quarters, Bhohany, 2nd April 1804.

To Lieut.-Col. Burn,
Commanding a Detachment.

END OF VOL. I.

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